# TELOS

**Number 31** **Spring 1977**

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# INTRODUCTION

*Discontinued years ago because of its alleged dubious value in creating a false thematic unity, the "Introduction" is coming back by popular demand. If nothing else, it will serve to explain* why *we publish what follows. The Carlo article dissects the history of the oil crisis to indicate* (1) *how it does not mean a shift in power relations between the First and parts of the Third World;* (2) *the need for radical historiography to focus on internal capitalist struggles to understand the unfolding of policies; and* (3) *how U.S. imperialism, although not omnipotent and omniscient, instrumentalizes economic crises in order to retain its world hegemony. The main point is that, according to Carlo's "iron law of underdevelopment," under imperialist relations the gap between the First and Third Worlds will continue to grow.*

*Contrary to recent attempts* (*e.g., Anderson's in* New Left Review *100*) *to forcibly fit Gramsci into the fictitious rise of a Marxist "science," whereby his major ideas such as hegemony are traced back through the Siberian tundra, "From Spaventa to Gramsci" seeks to show how* all *of Gramsci's main themes had nothing to do with Second International polemics or Russian social democratic squabbles, but were purely and simply a continuation of themes which, in various forms, had been in the Italian air at least since Cuoco's first edition of his 1799 account of the aborted Neapolitan revolution. Far from being a stepping stone to a nascent Marxist "science," Gramsci's work must be seen as part of the century-long attempt to extend the most radical implications of the French Revolution to the rest of Europe. Since this extension was plotted with the essential mediation of Hegelianism, the point becomes one of seeing how Gramsci unsuccessfully attempted to Leninize Croce.*

*This catastrophic attempt at Leninization of the Italian Hegelian tradition resulted in a series of political failures. In his analysis of the Italian council experience, Adler shows how Gramsci's evaluation of the situation as one final gasp of capitalism was completely off the wall, what he saw as weaknesses were really expressions of capitalist strength, and how, led by Olivetti, the industrialists were usually several steps ahead of the Left. Capitalist concessions, in retrospect, do not represent defeats brought about by working-class militancy, but rather, attempts to restructure working class composition in a Taylorist offensive.*

*Contrary to fashionable orthodox Marxist British interpretations* (*Williams, Hoare, etc.*), *according to which the cure-all is the "Party"—hence, their pathetic resurrection of the theoretical cadaver of Bordiga—the problems in 1920 Italy had nothing to do with the "correct" political organizational form. The mythical "party" sanctified by almost all sides of the British Left would have merely reproduced—as it does everywhere in advanced capitalism—the existing relations of domination under new honorific labels. From the very beginning, Leninist strategy sought to engage the peasantry through the plotting of agrarian reforms that had no chance of success, given the cultural and political defusion of the Northern working class. As Rutigliano indicates, Gramsci's misunderstanding of the meaning of the councils as the communist state* in nuce *rather than as the attempt of a rapidly obsolescent skilled working class to hang onto traditional privileges being phased out by the reorganization of the labor process, resulted in further accelerating political defeat.*

*By critically comparing the new with the old edition of Gramsci's* Prison Notebooks, *Baldan reconstructs the logic that guided the original edition and its political consequences. The evaluation of Gramsci as an historian on the basis of the new edition reveals the Sardinian to be deeply indebted to Croce and engaged in a*

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*theoretical struggle to revolutionize the latter's thought. The historical reconstruction that follows turns out to have very little in common with the aberrations of orthodox Marxist "science," but rather is deeply embedded in the neo-Hegelian tradition. Last, but not least, the special Gramsci section was put together entirely by Morton Schoolman.*

*Leftist conventional wisdom sees the Frankfurt School turning from a highly political youth to an apolitical, resigned old age. Adorno's "The Actuality of Philosophy" shatters this myth and shows how all of the main themes and shortcomings of* Negative Dialectics *were already present in 1930. Having realized the impossibility of articulating the totality as the viewpoint of a tendential subject-object identity, from the very beginning Adorno sought to re-dimension the scope of philosophical inquiry and social theory.*

*As early as Fall of 1968, we introduced the work of Karel Kosik and sought to launch a critical discussion of its importance for Marxist theory. Although we managed to publish the entire first part of* Dialectics of the Concrete *as well as several other essays of his, that discussion never got off the ground. With publication of the book in English, we hope once again to engage in such a discussion. Heller's relation of Kosik's work to that of Lukács, Adorno and Sartre is an excellent beginning.*

*Recent events in Czechoslovakia have resulted, among other things, in the death of Jan Patocka, whose only two essays in English have appeared in past issues of* Telos. *Kovanda's reconstruction of these events attempts to provide an introduction to the three documents that follow: "Charter 77 Manifesto," Patocka's "Political Testament," and Ricoeur's obituary-eulogy of Patocka. Additional notes by Friedrich, Alpert and Wiener deal with other themes in various topics.*

*In a sharp departure from our "never wash dirty laundry in public"-policy, this issue of* Telos *opens a new section, "Internal Polemics," that should give the reader a glimpse of the people and issues behind the scene. The correspondence published here deals with many problems that are currently under discussion. Among other things, these letters should help to dispel the Prussian academic image that* Telos *has unfortunately built up over the years.*

*In addition to Jacoby's exposure of another instance of the "falling rate of intelligence" among British Marxists, this issue includes a series of reviews that attempt to survey the growing English literature on Gramsci. The resulting picture is not too encouraging. But before despairing, one should read Mahaira-Odoni's survey of current Italian Gramsci-interpretations, or Good's review of Buci-Glucksmann's work in France to realize that things are even more confused on the other side of the ocean.*

*Far from being exhausted in this number of* Telos, *these issues are likely to be pursued in future numbers, where, among other things, a sustained effort will be made to begin to relate these issues to a current understanding of the U.S. Our exile into European theory may be nearing an end!*

*Paul Piccone*

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# THE OIL CRISIS AND THE IRON LAW OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT*

## by Antonio Carlo

*Some Unfounded Commonplaces*

The recent oil crisis has produced one of the most lively debates of the postwar era. Several taboos seemed at first sight to have crumbled: the myth of unequal exchange between raw materials and finished products; the myth of the weakness and of perpetual subordination of Third World countries. With time, however, the recognition has come that the issues were not as clear as was originally thought. Thus, the idea that an oil scarcity produced the crisis has been rejected (even though it is still put forth in some quarters);[1] indeed, there is so much oil[2] that on the eve of the crisis some argued for the need to lower prices.[3] Furthermore, there are alternative energy reserves for the next 500 years. No better grounded has been the hypothesis that multinational corporations exacerbated the crisis to obtain a lever on Middle Eastern oil because the ecology movement at home was blocking the refinement of American oil.[4] Instead, another legend has surfaced in opposition to the one attributing the crisis to the sheiks, i.e., that the crisis was single-handedly fabricated by the multinational petroleum companies,[5] called the "Big Seven" in the U.S. and the "Seven Sisters" by Mattei (of which five are American and two European).

Undoubtedly, the Seven Sisters had a strong hand in the affair: without the consensus of the multi-nationals who control the lion's share of the world's refining and distribution of oil, the oil countries could not have been able to increase prices.[6] Created in 1960, OPEC had requested price increases for ten years without success, until after 1970,[7] and the opposition of the Big Seven had always been decisive. But it is also true that, even if bound irrevocably to the U.S., the oil countries are no mere puppets. The time has passed when the

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*Originally published in *Terzo Mondo*, 31-32 (January-June, 1976), pp. 37-73. English translation by Susan LoBello.

1. This is the thesis unanimously defended by the "Big Seven" as well as by the OPEC countries. Cf. the interview with A. Lamine Khem, the secretary general of OPEC at the time of the crisis, "Les Confidences du 'Patron' de l'OPEC," in *Economia*, no. 8, pp. 24ff.

2. Cf. Fred Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans* (London, 1974), p. 426, note 21; and Michael Tanzer, *The Energy Crisis, World Struggle for Power and Wealth* (New York, 1974), p. 20.

3. Cf. M.A. Adelman, *The World Petroleum Market* (Baltimore, 1975). Adelman's position is clearly a toughening of traditional imperialist positions. Yet, the foundation of this position (i.e., petroleum is abundant) is correct. On this point, see the anonymous article, "Surabundance du Pétrole," in *La Nouvelle Revue des deux Mondes*, April 1975, pp. 83ff.

4. Cf. Frank Ackerman and Arthur MacEwan, "Energy and Power," in *Monthly Review*, 25:8 (January, 1974), p. 6.

5. This is argued by Stanley Aronowitz in his *Food, Shelter and the American Dream* (New York, 1974). For a radical and accurate critique of this thesis, see the review by Simon Rosenblum in *Telos*, 24 (Summer 1975), p. 171.

6. Cf. C.B. Zorzoli, *Il Dilemma Energetico* (Milan, 1971), pp. 84ff.

7. Cf. Tanzer, *op.cit.*, pp. 66ff.; and G. Grossi, *La Guerra del Petrolio* (Rome, 1974), p. 89.

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Big Seven obtained the heftiest portions of oil profits,[8] and with it has gone the time of the even split. Since the latter part of the 1950s, a division of profits in a 75-25 ratio has prevailed, and in 1971 and 1973 this ratio became 80-20 and 84-16.[9] Thus, the puppet era has long since disappeared. The producing countries are indeed significant, both with respect to their role in the internal dynamics of imperialism as well as to these countries' power to negotiate with the multinationals. The bonds are such that the sheiks, the Shah or President Perez still need the support of the multinationals to carry out their policies, while the latter are also in need of the former.

The October-December 1973 episode which led to a genuine price revolution is, therefore, most probably the result of an agreement between the two parties, OPEC and the Seven Sisters. Both were essential to the completion of the feat. The premise that the crisis was an invention of the multinationals is apparently grounded in OPEC's unchanging attitude over many years; the variable which brought on the crisis was the Big Seven's conversion to "price-hiking" after 1970. While this is true, it is necessary to emphasize that this variable could not touch off the crisis without the oil countries' consent, even if the Big Seven's conversion to price-hiking—the last element in the chain of events leading to the crisis—gives the illusion that only their decision counted.

The crux of the matter is the agreement betwen two parties: one which matured during the 1960s (OPEC) and the other later. The causes which pushed the OPEC cartel to price-hiking politics are obvious: to cut in on a bigger slice of profits from the imperialist pie, an event which would permit some oil-producing countries to attempt rapid industrial growth.[10] Less clear are the reasons that pushed the multinationals to change their politics, and this is the point to be examined.

Among Marxist scholars who have studied the crisis, the dominant tendency now is to attribute the main cause of the multinationals' turnabout to their interest in turning to good economic use those alternative energy sources previously rendered marginal by cheap oil.[11] The U.S., not quite self-sufficient with respect to oil, but abundantly blessed with other energy sources, would have gained a great advantage from the crisis. Well known reports by Exxon and the Chase Manhattan Bank, which began to circulate during the early 1970s, are cited to support this view.[12] Actually, the Exxon

8. It was the epoch prior to 1950 when it was possible for AIOC to make $613 million in profit against $316 for the Iranian government. Cf. Halliday, *op.cit.*, p. 472.

9. See Abdul A. Said and Luiz R. Simmons, in *The New Sovrains* (New Jersey, 1975), p. 23; and Tanzer, *op.cit.*, pp. 125-126.

10. Some countries such as Iran already before 1973 were engaged in an effort to develop, but with much more limited means and therefore with much more modest objectives. Cf. B. Nirumand, *La Persia Modello di Paese in Via di Sviluppo* (Milan, 1968).

11. See I. Muñoz, S. Roldan, G. Delgado, A. Serrano, *La Economia Española 1973* (Madrid, 1974), pp. 82-83. On the presence in the U.S. of vast alternative energy reserves, see R. Marconis, *Pétrole, la Grande Confrontation* (Toulouse, 1974), pp. 170ff.

12. Zorzoli, *op.cit.*, p. 93; and Grossi, *op.cit.*, pp. 7-8; Charles Levinson, *Capital, Inflation and the Multinationals* (London, 1971), pp. 202-204. The thesis rejected here is also defended by

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report merely pointed out that petroleum products would continue to increase until 1985, at which time they would decrease, not in absolute value, but as a percentage of total energy consumption (from 50 to 30 percent), to the year 2000. Only theoretically would this have implied the necessity for new investments in other areas (to be realized by increasing profits and prices). The Big Seven knew only too well that the petroleum era was not eternal (though by no means is it down to its last few moments). Thus, for a number of years they had been working to put other energy resources into operation[13] and the low price-policy was the ideal solution to round up other energy resources. Thus, they had no reason to hike prices. Even the report from the big Rockefeller bank (tied symbiotically to the oil world) should be read skeptically, because there has never been a powerful capitalist organization that has ever admitted that prices are raised to make more profits: behind all price-hiking decisions there are always noble humanitarian considerations, or at least considerations tied to "painful" necessities. In this vein, the bank's report points out that, from an energy standpoint, 500 billion dollars of investment would have been required in the 1970s, more than twice that of the preceding decade. Unfortunately, in the late 1960s the investment dynamic of the multinationals was scanty, with the latter apparently having earned little. Thus,... The data on certain investments in energy materials, however, render the above argument questionable. Recently Commoner has pointed out that, if the predicted investments in the area of nuclear plants for 1985 were effectively realized, that year they would comprise 81 percent of American industrial investments—which smacks of absurdity.[14] Again, with respect to the Chase Manhattan Bank, the least one can say is that its predictions seem constructed to legitimate the price-hiking policy being undertaken: 500 billion dollars would be a conceivable investment for one decade if there were a scarcity of oil or of other energy materials (and this is not the case, at least for the upcoming decades), or if there were the possibility of a continuation or acceleration of the American boom of the 1960s. Instead, after 1969, black clouds gathered on the U.S. horizon. Everyone was aware of the difficulty of the times, and optimistic predictions became anomalous. Certainly, the Big Seven's profits gave signs of dropping off and the rate of investment was not as rosy. But this is a general phenomenon for the American economy. The "low" prices of petroleum products, which up until then had permitted rates (and volumes) of very acceptable profits relative to investments, have nothing to do with it. The disease lies within the U.S. economy as a whole. Immediately after the oil

Tanzer, *op.cit.* J.M. Chevalier, *Le Nouvel Enjen Pétrolier* (Paris, 1973); E. Tiliacos, in "La Crisi Energetica," in *Quaderni di Politica ed Economia*, no. 11, p. 83; S. Vaccà, "Crisi Energetica e Rapporti tra Paesi Capitalistici e Paesi Petroliferi," in *Bollettino di Economia e Politica Industriale*, no. 4, pp. 3ff.

13. Cf. Zorzoli, *op.cit.*, p. 94; Ford Foundation, *A Time to Choose* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 230ff., where it is pointed out that there has been a significant expansion after 1962. See also Tanzer, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

14. G.B. Zorzoli, "La Soubrette Nucleare ha Sedotto il Ministro," in *Avanti*, September 21, 1975, where Commoner's data are reported.

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crisis in 1974, there was a substantial increase in Big Seven energy investments. But this was not due to growing industrial needs (the decline in production, employment, and consumer goods was widespread, while prospects for upswings continued to be dim)[15] nor to the search for other sources of energy to replace oil. The real cause is elsewhere: the oil price increase made it more economical to exploit other energy resources that would be competitive at the new prices and which the multinationals, anticipating their rivals, were committed to appropriating.

Regardless of how successful they have been in the past with respect to other energy resources, the Big Seven are far from controlling the latter in the same global manner that they control oil: in 1971, they controlled 71.8 percent of the world production of crude oil, 63 percent of refining capacity and 70.3 percent of total sales.[16] Still, at the beginning of the 1970s neither economic prospects nor the state of energy resources justified grandiose programs of investment and the resultant abrupt price-hikes. What's more, the same control of energy resources that were to replace oil in a few decades may have been obtained perhaps more easily with a policy of low prices rather than with one of large investment.

The game was easy: the "low" price of oil made other sources marginal and permitted them to be bought for chicken feed. Thus, the policy of low prices was not antithetical to a long-range policy of energy hoarding, but was functional to it. Furthermore, oil prices had been low only in a manner of speaking. These were always monopoly prices fixed in a way to leave some space even to marginal producers, since the cost of oil production in the Persian Gulf was very low: a few cents a barrel in many cases.[17] In the 1960s the rate and volume of profits from oil ventures were by no means negligible[18] and, in spite of the already mentioned slack, the oil industry's new annual investments went from $10,425 million in 1961 ($5,100 million in the U.S. and $5,325 million abroad) to $20,125 million in 1970 ($8,225 million in the U.S. and $11,900 million abroad).[19] On the whole, therefore, this cannot be characterized as a bad decade, for low oil prices (monopoly prices) allowed realization of the squaring of the circle: high profits and investments,

15. It has been precisely the increase in oil prices to rapidly accelerate the ongoing crisis—a crisis which has affected some sectors, the automobile industry in particular, even within the U.S. Thus it is wrong to talk about the advantages that the country's whole economy would have obtained from the crisis since the latter has had its winners and losers even in the U.S. Cf. Tanzer, *op.cit.*, pp. 130ff. The most illustrious loser is the automobile industry, whose profits have sharply declined (cf. Sergio Bologna, "Petrolio e Mercato Mondiale," in *Quaderni Piacentini*, no. 52, p. 22) along with production (see "Dossier Automobile," in *Economia*, no. 10, p. 70, where the data is given). Consequently, unemployment has grown rapidly (see B. Kapp, "Vivre avec le Chômage, le Sant dans l'Inconnu," in *Economia*, no. 15, pp. 10ff. On the crisis in the automobile industry, see also B. Morel, "L'Automobile est Malade," in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. 259, pp. 9ff).

16. Cf. M. Vittorini, *Petrolio e Potere* (Padua and Venice, 1974), p. 121.

17. Cf. Grossi, *op.cit.*, p. 39. In 1972 the cost of extracting petroleum was six cents a barrel in Kuwait, 25 cents in Abu Dhabi, 30 cents in Libya, 29 cents in Oman, 14-22 in Qatar, 12-15 in Iraq.

18. Lockwood, *op.cit.*, p. 56.

19. Cf. Grossi, *op.cit.*, pp. 35ff., for more detailed data.

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marginalization and purchases of alternative energy sources at bargain rates.

It is clear why the Big Seven defended this policy through 1970. Then at the beginning of 1971 (Teheran conference) the picture changed: the Libyan representative reported that, to the great surprise of the OPEC countries, the multinational representatives came "not to fight, but to sign."[20] The decisions of Teheran were only the finishing touch which did not worry the Western economies very much; but the decisions did symbolize the turnabout in price policy, foreshadowing the autumn 1973 catastrophe. Given that the official positions and manufactured reports of the Big Seven masked the real motives for the turnabout in policy, it is necessary to understand the actual reasons why the lucrative policy of "low prices" was abandoned.

*The Real Causes of the Oil Crisis*

Also unsatisfactory is the thesis that ascribes the change in policy to the serious phenomenon of Arab nationalism which, in eroding profit rates, would have pushed the Big Seven to milk the cow while there was still time. Those Arab governments dominating oil production (the Emirates, Iran, Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait) practice moderate politics. To speak of them as puppets is implausible, but to hypothesize an anti-imperialist nationalism in certain quarters is ridiculous.[21] The Big Seven know this and by the end of the 1960s some had strengthened their presence in the Middle East (where oil investments yield more heavily) in order to react to a decrease in profits in the U.S.[22] Even if complete nationalization had occurred, the control over refining and distribution was such as to force the oil countries to an agreement (i.e., to a slicing of the pie) with the Big Seven. The multinational corporations' situation did not worsen but in fact improved during the 1960s, when the downfall of the only rival that gave them any trouble[23] coincided with a switch in Soviet oil policy. In the interest of easing international tension, the Soviets sacrificed the previous tendency to support certain Arab countries' attempts at autonomy (that of the more progressive ones). Besides, the oil nations' recent nationalizations have been for the most part respectful of the obligation to avoid severing relations with the all too necessary Big Seven. As for the Lybian (September 1, 1973) and the Algerian (February 24, 1972) nationalizations, it is only necessary to note that they seized only 51 percent of the enterprises.[24]

The very policy of increasing the share of the percentage of oil prices appropriated by the oil-producing countries (decided in 1971 and 1973) was formulated in such a way as to take into account both the demands of OPEC and of the Big Seven: the change in the share coincided with price increases

20. Tanzer, *op.cit.*, p. 121.
21. On the ties between Arab regimes and imperialism, see Halliday, *op.cit.*
22. Lockwood, *op.cit.*, p. 57.
23. Tanzer, *op.cit.*, pp. 86-87.
24. Marconis, *op.cit.*, pp. 137ff., and pp. 158ff. Notwithstanding nationalization, Iraq also has been forced to deal with IPC since its oil had no outlets. See Halliday, *op.cit.*, p. 403.

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which also increased the proceeds per barrel for the Big Seven.[25]

Having put aside even this type of false interpretation,[26] it is necessary to point out a surprising fact: almost all Marxist researchers seemed to miss the connection between the oil crisis and the crisis of American imperialism which was already clear in 1971 and 1973, as evidenced by the two monetary crises which preceded the oil crisis.[27] Actually, the drop in the rate of profit became evident in 1969, the year of the U.S. economic turnabout, when the boom of the 1960s ended. This drop accelerated in the recession years of 1970-71 (it went from 10.8 percent to 9.3 percent, as opposed to 11.4 percent in 1969, 12.3 in 1968, and 12.2 in 1966), while there was a slight surge (to 10 percent) in 1972 in conjunction with the temporary upswing of the "drugged" U.S. economy. Lockwood foreshadows the thesis that the diminishing rate of profits pushed the Big Seven to raise prices. Yet, the erosion does not seem to have been so great as to warrant such drastic consequences: Exxon, who had invested the most in the Middle East, did well (12.8 percent in 1972, versus 12.2 in 1966) as did Mobil Oil (11.4 percent versus 9.7); the average erosion in oil profits did not bring the Big Seven's rate of profit to levels very different from those of industry in general in 1972 (10 percent versus 10.6). Undoubtedly, the recession took its toll, but earlier in the postwar period the American economy had also known moments of recession that did not, however, end in a confrontation between oilmen and automobile manufacturers, who were heavily hit by the oil price-hikes. Furthermore, Lockwood sees only one external index (i.e., the erosion of the average rate of profit). But this is the tip of the iceberg. More important than the recession *per se* or the drop in profit rates is the American recession's new character which, e.g., renders it qualitatively different from the 1957-58 recession. This new element consists in the irreversible crisis of the system of consumption

25. Tanzer, *op.cit.*, pp. 125-126. The thesis according to which Arab nationalism forced the companies to investigate the possibility of other sources has, among others, been defended by Tanzer, *op.cit.*, p. 32; F. Pistolese, *Energia, Economia e Ambiente* (Bari, 1974), pp. 128-129. According to Pistolese, the companies were about to abandon the Middle East. Yet, before the crisis, some of the biggest companies deployed their investments in the area, and afterwards the Middle East became more than ever before the goose that lays the golden egg that need not be given up—also because real risks are limited.

26. Other false interpretations attribute one of the causes of the crisis to the need to adjust the price of crude oil from the Middle East to that of the U.S. (cf. Tanzer, *op.cit.*, pp. 122-123). In addition to the fact that the difference was only that of a dollar, Tanzer himself points out that the adjustment had been realized six months before the crisis. Grossi (*op.cit.*, p. 8) not only points out the problem of the protection of the environment, but speaks of the political price of natural gas, somewhat unprofitable for the Big Seven. It is strange that Grossi, who emphasizes the enormous weight of the Big Seven on U.S. policy (even to the point of exaggerating!) does not understand that the oil lobby could have obtained a re-adjustment in the price of natural gas without causing the cataclysm of the energy crisis. This would have been less involved and less dangerous than the 1973 crisis which, as Ackerman and MacEwan point out (*op.cit.*, p. 6), considerably troubled the Big Seven, who sought to legitimate it by preparing a massive advertising campaign against waste.

27. An important exception is Lockwood, who noted that the erosion of the big multinationals' profit rate roughly coincided with the drop in American industry's profit rate after 1966. See Lockwood, *op.cit.*, p. 56. The data in the text are from Lockwood's tables and deal with the average profits of the nine major oil companies in the U.S.

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based on the automobile and durable goods, a system which reached its peak in the 1960s.

The U.S. establishment perceived this fact at the political and economic level: in 1969 the Nixon administration warned Japan not to continue in its policy of wild expansion in the American market, and adopted internal protectionist measures. These words were followed by action: the two monetary crises which followed were aimed at making U.S. goods more competitive on the international market. Faced with a market that did not draw as it used to and in which there was not room for everyone, the U.S. attempted to eliminate its foreign rivals. The automobile manufacturers who were at the center of the controversy did not hide their concern: Henry Ford II displayed it in 1971, and in 1973 his sentiments were echoed by other major figures.[28] The 1972 upturn was due to conjunctural factors such as the government's fiscal policy concerning capital revenues, which gave life to profits, but did not resolve the structural problems of the U.S. economy. Furthermore, they removed from the government the means for long-term structural intervention. At the beginning of 1973 the percentage of foreign automobiles on the American market fell only from 15.1 percent in 1971 to 15 percent in 1972 of the total sales.[29] Shortly after came the second crisis of the dollar. The fact was that the market was glutted as never before: selling eight to ten million automobiles a year to a population of about 205 million people is not easy, when there were already 92 million cars and about 19 million commercial vehicles in use in 1971, and especially when the consumer debt exceeded the safety limit. With the prospect of a declining market, the competition of the more economical European or Japanese cars could no longer be tolerated. Furthermore in the U.S. as in Europe (if to a lesser degree), as the market base for a certain product increases, the rate of its growth diminishes: for example, in the 1960s the U.S. had 310 television sets per 1000 inhabitants, and in 1971 it has 449, with an increment of less than 50 percent in 11 years. In Italy, during the same period, the figure went from 43 to 191 per 1000, more than quadrupling the market base.[30] Thus, in perspective, the outlook was for a declining trend. In this situation, the never quite forgotten ghost of 1929 reappeared. Kindelberger's book, published

28. Cf. Emma Rothschild, *Paradise Lost: The Decline of the Auto-industrial Age* (New York, 1973), pp. 3-53.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

30. These data on automobiles and television sets are taken from the U.N. *Statistical Yearbook* of 1972. The data clearly indicate a very serious saturation and it does not seem feasible to carry out, in order to resolve the problem, a policy of conversion of the American automobile industry to produce small automobiles (an hypothesis put forth after the oil crisis). Aside from European competition, which is very stiff in the small automobile market, it should be pointed out that this type of automobile no longer sells very well. FIAT, one of the world's leaders in this sector, saw a decline in production of 400,000 units, slightly less than a quarter of its 1972 production. See Philippe Vigneau, "Quand FIAT va, l'Italie va...et Inversement," in *Economia*, no. 15, pp. 32ff. This is easily understood: inflation (pre-existing, but intensified by the oil crisis) has considerably raised purchase prices and maintenance costs. Small automobiles are no longer cheap: the age of mass consumption is on the wane.

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in 1973, is very clear: if one wants to avoid future 1929s, one must resuscitate the hegemonic role of the U.S. and the dollar: a world-governed economy "made in U.S.A." [31] This is equivalent to saying that the costs of the American contradictions should fall on the rest of the world, a policy followed by the Nixon administration since 1971. But this was a recognition of the severity of the crisis, from which there did not seem to be an out other than by transferring the costs to imperialist partners—something which is neither easy nor painless. The success of Kindleberger's book (enthusiastically received by Galbraith) is a symptom of the establishment's concern. Since this situation did indeed develop after 1969, it would be naive to overlook the attitude of the oil lobby when faced with such dire facts. In fact, the oilmen were an integral and by no means secondary part of the industrial system in crisis. The recipe discovered in World War II was simple: military expenditures created job opportunities, and therefore a demand for durable consumer goods. Industry began working at full capacity and required energy, as did consumers who needed to operate their wasteful low-performance cars and household gadgets. Everything went well and everyone cashed in: automobile manufacturers as well as oilmen. In 1969-70 things changed: the model became cramped and did not work anymore. Furthermore, if things go wrong in the U.S., sooner or later they also go wrong in the rest of the capitalist world, due to the preponderance of the U.S. economy.[32] Thus, a rupture developed between oilmen and automobile manufacturers. If the model was not working anymore, there was only one way to save oil profits: to "succumb" to the price-hiking pressures of OPEC. Therefore, a public campaign was launched aimed at alerting the consumer about energy wastefulness—wastes which now appear bad because the era of abundance was over. Naturally, there will be less waste in the future. This model of waste, formerly backed in the Golden years by the oil companies because it was profitable, came under attack because it was no longer profitable: Atlantic Richfield openly attacked the car as a symbol of irrational waste and pollution.[33] Here the policy of the recurring dollar crisis could not have been seen in a favorable light by the Big Seven. If the dollar lost value, American cars would be sold at a better market price, but the sheiks would see part of their dollar purchasing power fall: their profits, in real terms, would fall, and to overcome this, they would increase their price-hiking pressure, or worse, if the Seven Sisters would not yield to price-hiking pressures, they would ask for a revision of price scales.[34] In the past, the Seven Sisters could very well be

31. Charpes P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973). Cf. also Grossi, *op.cit.*, p. 59. For a detailed exposition and critique of Kindleberger, see my review in *Telos*, 24 (Summer 1975), pp. 173ff.

32. This is so not only because the U.S. consumes 34 percent of the world's energy (cf. Ackerman and MacEwan, *op.cit.*, p. 2) but also because, as is well known, the economic equilibrium in a country representing two fifths of capitalist industrial production conditions the whole system.

33. Rothschild, *op.cit.*, pp. 5-6.

34. The revision of the price scales in Teheran at the beginning of 1971 precedes the dollar crisis. But for 15 years, Arab governments had been victims of inflation so that it is not correct to

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opposed to the hike, because they had an interest in defending a working model whose interests they shared. Now that the model was in crisis, they no longer had any reason to sacrifice themselves on the altar of the automobile masters and create tensions in the relations with an essential partner like OPEC. Therefore, in the heart of the 1970-71 recession, the Teheran agreement was reached: prices rose, if only a little, and the first tendency toward a policy reversal appeared. Yet, in order to understand how this first readjustment led to the 1973 price revolution, one must take into account another protagonist in the affair: the U.S. government. Again, the American crisis remains fundamental for an understanding even of this actor's actions.

*U.S. Government Policy*

When speaking of the role of the U.S. government in the oil crisis, one is generally under the influence of the Ford Foundation report, which emphasizes how the oil lobby backed Nixon financially.[35] By reading between the lines, it is implied that the U.S. government's acquiescence in the confrontations with OPEC could have been bought. Even some Marxists fall into the trap of such a simplistic explanation.[36] Certainly, the U.S. government has always been very condescending toward the Big Seven: there is proof that it literally showed them the best way of evading U.S. income taxes, i.e., the best way to cheat itself.[37] The oil world, however, is not the only one to benefit from U.S. policy. The two crises of the dollar were responsive above all to the interests of the automobile industry, and tax evasions are tolerated by the entire American establishment which heavily subsidizes the two main U.S. parties (funded largely by non-oil revenues).[38] Against McGovern in 1972, Nixon had practically unanimous support from all of American business, not just oilmen. Thus, the U.S. government also represents the oil lobby, but not exclusively. Regardless of how much the Ford Foundation would like to forget it, the automobile lobby also had a hand. The effect of this lobby has been enormous during the last years. One need only look at the history of the second dollar crisis: only eight months before the oil crisis, automobile interests were not in the least secondary in the thought (and actions) of the U.S. government. Early in February 1973, the travelling ambassador Ebberle asked the Japanese to adopt adequate measures to correct their commercial out-distancing of the U.S., which had quickened between 1971 and 1972. On February 8, there was talk of serious protective measures that Nixon would have requested from Congress; on February 9, there was panic in Germany, where there were growing signs of anti-American feelings; on the 13th, the U.S. Treasury announced the

note that only with the dollar crisis did they discover the danger of inflation. Cf. F. Ciafaloni, "Petrolio e Potere," in *Fabbrica e Stato*, no. 9-10, p. 56.

35. Ford Foundation, *op.cit.*, p. 241.
36. Cf. Tanzer, *op.cit.*, p. 122; and Grossi, *op.cit.*, p. 85.
37. S. Simen and F. Ippolito, *La Questione Energetica* (Milan, 1974), pp. 54ff.
38. Cf. G.W. Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* (New Jersey, 1975), pp. 87ff.

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devaluation.[39] Clearly, the decision to devaluate was made even though it conflicted with the interests of essential allies in European and Asian quarters (West Germany and Japan). The U.S. government decisively acted in the interests of automobile manufacturers, even if that action presumably entailed considerable damage to the oil interests. The sheiks, in fact, do not particularly enjoy inflation policies: from 1955 to 1970, as an OPEC expert has pointed out, they lost about 35 percent of that part of their purchasing power which was in dollars.[40]

Thus, it is clear that such policies hindered the relations between the Big Seven and OPEC, had not the former decided to ratify further price increases after those of 1971. Although the OPEC countries' nationalism could not succeed in excluding the Big Seven from the oil circle, the cartel countries are no longer the puppets they were during the pre-1950 period. Furthermore, the moderate increases of 1971 did not radically change the oil companies' profit rate, which by the end of 1972, despite a mild upswing, still had not reached the level of the 1960s. The devaluation of the dollar cured the effects, but not the causes, of the U.S. crisis, and thus was not able to reinstitute the old system. It is therefore understandable why there prevailed increasingly less moderate price-hiking tendencies, both in OPEC and among the Big Seven, who had no interest in opposing the producing countries' price-hikes. Yet, all of this does not explain the U.S. government's moderation toward the Arabs regarding the crisis of 1973. What forced the Nixon administration to modify its favorable attitude of just a few months earlier toward the interests of the automobile industry?

It is difficult to answer with certainty. We only know that a confrontation of colossal dimensions must have occurred. In addition to the attacks against the old model of growth based on the automobile, expressed through incredibly ridiculous propaganda, there had to be other attacks behind the scenes. Only after the release of the relevant documents—i.e., only when we will have access to the U.S. government archives, those of the Big Seven and of the automobile monopolies—will we know for sure what arguments and pressures were employed. At this stage, we can only advance hypotheses. The need for a world-governed economy, which made headway within the American establishment during 1973, could not easily be realized under the shadow of one currency, the dollar, perennially on the brink of devaluation (which does not resolve the fundamental problem). The Seven Sisters, on the other hand, could offer the government the deadly arm of energy control. The U.S. abounds in energy reserves and imports little oil; for the other neocapitalist countries (France, Italy, Japan, West Germany), a rapid increase in the price of oil would upset their balance of payments and the

39. For a chronology of the various phases of the second monetary crisis, see V.Z., "Cronaca della Crisi Valutaria," in *Mondo Economico*, no. 6 (1973), pp. 10ff.

40. More exactly, the percentage is 34.7. See N. Sarkis, *Le Pétrole à l'Heure Arabe* (Paris, 1975), p. 79. In relation to the pound, the erosion of the Arabs' purchasing power in the period in question is over 45.4 percent.

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economy. For the U.S., the crisis in certain sectors could be compensated to a certain extent by the restabilization of the balance of payments and by the prospect of controlling energy. These predictions have partly come true: in 1975 the American balance of trade, unfavorable for years, became more favorable than ever: $5,460 million dollars in the first nine months, an unsurpassed record in the economic history of the U.S. Capital began flowing into the Yankee economy even from Europe, reversing the tendency of earlier years.[41] Immediately after the crisis, the U.S. government launched an energy policy aimed at assuring itself a privileged position *vis-à-vis* its imperialist partners. This policy was, however, very costly, and consisted in the automobile crisis (a crisis which involved the entire economy except for the oil companies) as well as the unemployment problem. It is difficult to imagine that a bourgeois-democratic government could easily pay such prices. It must present itself every four years to the electorate, and the automobile-based model guaranteed (relative) employment and well-being, i.e., it was a model which created political consensus for the system, a fact that no bourgeois state can disregard.[42] This explains the Nixon administration's tendency to defend the automobile interests as long as possible. But it could be that these American administrators have simply put up with, rather than fully shared, the Big Seven's policy. After the crisis, in fact, Kissinger and Schultz declared that a price as high as $6 a barrel would have been acceptable.[43] This was not propaganda but a statement of the actual position. This price would have constituted a brutal blow to competitive nations, importers of great quantities of oil; it would have made economical the use of many American energy reserves and would not have sacrificed the U.S.automobile industry at all. It would have been an ideal equilibrium point. Significantly, the Arab minister Yamani later said that at the OPEC meeting, he had proposed $7, with the upper and lower extremes being $14 and $5.40 respectively.[44] We have no reason to doubt this: it is known that in OPEC there are hawks and doves, and it is logical to infer that a faithful ally of the U.S. would articulate positions similar to those of the Nixon administration.

41. "Investir aux Etats-Unis," in *Economia*, no. 12, p. 29; and "Le Monde à l'Invers," in *Economia*, no. 18, p. 24. I disagree with the first of these two anonymous articles, which attributes this flux to an equalization of wages that would make the U.S.a country with cheap labor with respect to Europe. This tendency is only beginning and, as the author himself admits, is only partially concretized. Thus, if capital moves from one side to the other of developed countries (the two wealthy sides of the Atlantic), it is because the U.S. economy has held up better in the face of the crisis. But the latter has been hard also in the U.S., whose strength today consists only in a lesser weakness—which documents the gravity of capitalist problems.

42. Cf. Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (New York, 1969).

43. Cf. Grossi, *op.cit.*, p. 103, where he claims that the increase went "a little beyond" what Nixon & Co. wanted. The "little" is almost twice as much. Clearly, Grossi minimizes a datum which does not fit in the over-simplistic scheme which he uses. Samir Amin reiterates that $6-7 was the price foreseen by the U.S. (e.g., in his interview in *Il Manifesto*, January 14, 1976, p. 2), but that after Yom Kippur the Arabs imposed a higher price increase, thus obtaining a great anti-imperialist victory. It seems that Amin over-emphasizes the anti-imperialist role of certain governments and forgets the one, no less decisive, of the Big Seven. In this context, the oil crisis expresses more a contrast within imperialism rather than a victory over it.

44. Grossi, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

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Furthermore, U.S. policy after the oil crisis confirms this interpretation. The American government seemed seriously concerned with the prospect that the highly visible oil price-hike might incite other organizations similar to OPEC, based on other raw materials,[45] to follow the sheiks' example, gaining eventual support from imperialist groups importing raw materials. The danger seemed real: in the first months of 1974, there was a major effort to raise prices of raw materials and agricultural products, to which the U.S. responded very firmly using, among other things, a less spectacular but more effective and reprehensible threat than military intervention: food blackmail.[46] Very quickly, relations were "normalized."[47] In other words, the U.S. government knew that a challenge to unequal exchange could produce a mortal crisis for American industry: oil had to remain unique, and it was evidently easier to make it appear such the less extraordinary and the more fixed its price appeared to be.

The gravity of the American industrial situation seemed to push the Ford administration to reconsider protectionist measures in defense of the auto industry.[48] The electoral count (by now it was the eve of the Presidential elections) carried weight in this game, but after the elections, no government within a bourgeois-democratic framework can passively tolerate such high unemployment. Social consensus for the system is essential to advanced capitalism and its representative democratic system. Therefore, the problem was not merely electoral. Thus, the figure of $6 announced by Kissinger and Schultz was not an invention, but a real political projection for the Nixon administration. Nonetheless, the increase was much larger at that time. To understand how events unfolded, it is necessary to recall the Yom Kippur war.

Of course, the Arab-Israeli war was not the cause of the crisis and at most provided a not necessarily unforeseen opportunity for it. What was unforeseen, however, was what happened in the field: the Israelis lost, not so much militarily (it was a draw)[49] as politically, in the sense that it put to rest the myth of their invincibility. After Yom Kippur, the U.S. could no longer carry out a policy of indirect intervention when things in the Middle East did not go according to plan, leaving irksome military duties to Israel. Now it was necessary to intervene militarily in a direct manner (as in Lebanon in 1958), something which Kissinger, in a famous interview, did not rule out for the future. Yet, no American administration could impose on a country who had recently left the Vietnam rice-paddies with "honor" [*sic*] a new military venture which could have turned into a Vietnam to the tenth power (the

45. In fact, OPEC is only the best known of these associations. As for the others, see "La Sindacalisation du Tiers-Monde," in *Dossier Jeune Afrique*, no. 1, pp. 88ff.

46. Cf. the various articles published in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. 258, pp. 9ff. On the food crisis, see also "La Crise Alimentaire Mondiale," in *Dossier Jeune Afrique*, no. 2.

47. See "Huit Exemples Significantes," in *Economia*, no. 15, pp. 68ff.

48. See J.A. Fralon, "Etats-Unis: Attention, Campagne Electoralel," in *Economia*, no. 17, p. 12.

49. The war was interrupted because the losses on both sides were such as to paralyze both. See "Guerre et Paix: la Balance des Risques," in *Annuaire Jeune Afrique*, 1975, p. 354.

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recent behavior of the U.S. Congress with respect to Angola is indicative of the tendency not to support any new potential Vietnams). Other means were not lacking to U.S. imperialism, but to block the exorbitant 1973 price increases would have required such a mammoth direct intervention with unpredictable outcomes, on the doorstep of the Soviet Union, and presumably also aimed at traditional and faithful allies (the Emirates, the Saudi-Arabian monarchy, Iran) that it was beyond the reach of the U.S.

Such a situation could not but encourage OPEC and the Big Seven to adopt the hawks' price-hiking position: the cards were too stacked and the power relations too favorable for such an alluring opportunity to be lost.

Thus, the only thing remaining for the U.S. government to do was accept the increase which had probably been anticipated, but not in such disproportionate dimensions. If this reconstruction of the situation is accurate, then the multinationals' power has reached such dimensions as to permit them not only to condition the life of small countries such as Chile and of great powers such as Japan and West Germany, but also to lean even on the U.S. government itself.[50]

*Recycling Petrodollars, or: Wealthier but More Enslaved*

Thus, the oil crisis meant a shift in wealth within the imperialist system: the volume and rate of the multinationals' profits increased, along with the oil countries' revenues.[51] This, however, immediately posed a serious problem: the recycling of petrodollars. It so happens that the oil-exporting countries cannot absorb so much wealth in capitalist terms: these are poor countries, in which opportunities for "profitable" investment are very modest. Thus, studies began to flourish assuring the old Western world that everything would be as before, that petrodollars would stay at home. The first studies of Arab countries' policies confirmed these predictions. After having thoroughly analyzed the recycling policies of Kuwait, Saudi-Arabia and the Emirates, Michael Field concluded: "One of the most striking conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of the oil states' monetary reserves is that in effect their surplus does a U-turn and comes straight back to be invested in the major

50. In fact, the state must mediate among various capitalist sectors in order to allow the system to overcome its frictions in the long-term general interest of the capitalist class.

51. Tanzer, *op.cit.*, p. 131, provides the following figures: $6 billion of oil revenues in 1969, $23 billion in 1973 and $100 billion in 1974. It follows that the revenues of the Big Seven have risen enormously, even if much less, given that most of the price increase went to the governments. Some OPEC experts have sought to play down the impact of these figures—which perhaps should be reduced (see Grossi, *op.cit.*, pp. 44ff.), although they remain colossal—by pointing out that, while everyone was surprised by the OPEC revenues, no one noted that from 1973 to 1974 West German export went from $67.7 billion to $90 billion, considerably more than the revenues of the OPEC Arab countries (cf. Sarkis, *op.cit.*, p. 128). But Sarkis errs in comparing a stock of commodities with a stock of capital—two different things. Even assuming that the rate of profit in exports is 10 or 11 percent (which is not small during periods of industrial crisis), the Germans would only earn $9 or $10 billion transformable into new capital. All of the oil revenues, on the other hand, constitute new net capital which can be invested. In order for the Germans to realize a profit comparable to Arab revenues, the Germans would have to export more than $500 billion of commodities.

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industrial countries, and, on a smaller scale, in the developing world. In fact, most of the money never leaves the consumer states at all. It is simply transferred from the accounts of the oil companies in London and New York to the accounts of the producers in the same centers—and is then spread among the other European states, Canada and Japan."[52]

Even Iran, who does not seek a recycling rentier role and who has launched a gigantic program of industrial development, foresees absorbing in five years only $69 billion from internal investments, whereas it should earn between $102 and $108 billion.[53] According to other estimates, foreign investment in Iran will amount to $40 to $45 billion by the end of the 1970s.[54]

It is predicted that out of $400 billion to be received by OPEC countries in upcoming years, at least half will be recycled to advanced countries, and the rest should go for the acquisition of goods produced by the West (very often weapons or luxury goods), or for the financing of development programs[55] which, however, require an enormous quantity of capital goods purchasable in the West at rising prices. The situation concerns the more aware and progressive Arabs, who well understand that without a policy of massive industrial development in the producing countries, capable of mobilizing *all* of their potential, the chain of bondage to the West will not be broken.[56]

The problem, however, is not to restructure the international monetary mechanism which, through recycling, makes the Arabs richer but more tied to the West.[57] The causes of bondage are not only monetary: the monetary system is only the superstructure of imperialism, i.e., of a system in which there is an organic difference of average profit rates between rich and poor countries and capital tends to flow to the former.[58] In the poor countries, there are opportunities for profitable investment, but they are limited and, once realized, profits tend to migrate to the rich sectors of the system. It happens, therefore, that the rich countries' investments produce a disproportionate return of profits, superior to the invested capital, so that the poor countries finance rich ones. The petrodollars are not an exception to this rule. The international monetary system is merely the vehicle through which a structurally rooted problem is expressed—a situation which can only be overcome by challenging its basis, i.e., the logic and dynamics of profit-making characteristic of an imperialist system.[59]

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52. Cf. Michael Field, *A Hundred Million Dollars a Day* (London, 1975), p. 216.
53. Cf. G. Grossi, *Iran* (Milan, 1974), pp. 13 and 36.
54. Cf. M. Barang, "L'Iran, Renaissance d'un Empire," in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. 254, p. 21.
55. Cf. Halliday, *op.cit.*, p. 414; also J.Y. Chapin, *L'Utilization des Revenus du Pétrole Arabe et Iranien* (Brussels, 1975).
56. Cf. A. Sid-Aluned, *L'Economie Arabe à l'heure des Surplus Pétrolier* (Paris, 1975).
57. See G. Corm, "L'OPEC Face à la Confiscation de la Rente Pétrolière," in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. 258, p. 7. Corm proposes a restructuring of the monetary mechanism in order to remedy this problem.
58. Cf. Antonio Carlo, "Towards a Redefinition of Imperialism," in *Telos*, 20 (Summer 1974), pp. 109-119.
59. What occurs here is a situation in which the economic strength of the debtor conditions

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Nothing can be done, therefore, as long as we remain within the present system of production relations. Yet, the movement of petrodollars produced a series of consequences that it is worthwhile analyze. Let us take a closer look at the recycling policies of the major oil-producing countries: "Kuwait bought 14 percent of Daimler-Benz, paid $256 million for London's St. Martin's Property Corp. (real estate company), and bought the Manhattan Tower in Paris for $250 million. President Ford personally approved of Iran's loan of $300 million to Pan American and the acquisition of some of its stock; meanwhile, the German government confirmed the Shah's purchase of partnership in Krupp (25 percent). Abu Dhabi bought 44 percent of London's Commercial Union Insurance for about $800 million; the United Arab Emirates bought Mereworth Castle for $1,200 million. With German approval, an Arab financial group took 17 percent of the Mannesmann capital, the world's second largest producer of steel tubing. The Japanese have announced that in six months the Arabs invested $120 million in their bond market. But there is nothing to be worried about, *Newsweek* observed, for only $2 billion were invested in this way... Thus, out of $60 billion invested in 1974, not less than 10 percent went for the acquisition of American treasury notes, 1.7 percent for stocks, 12.5 percent for English treasury notes... As for direct agreements, the most reluctant are the Americans. The Italians got involved under the influence of a particularly difficult economic conjuncture. But it is France that shows a predisposition for this type of agreement. The imminent conclusion of an agreement between Paris and Teheran foreshadows investments in Black Africa of sums ranging from $3 to $10 billion. This impressive sum (three times the balance of the World Bank) is not definitely fixed, and when it will be, it will certainly include investments in France, particularly in nuclear plants. Lastly, banks calling for oil funds are multiplying. The game of bank partnership at various levels (A constitutes B, which in turn constitutes C, etc.) makes it difficult to single out the banks whose partnership is Arab or Iranian. Furthermore, Western governments encourage and protect the creation of consortia. This is capital."[60]

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the creditor. According to Vittorio Foa, this is normal, since the ruin of the debtor entails that of the creditor also. But the history of imperialist relations proves the opposite: the wealth of the metropolis is based on the indebtedness and the ruin of the periphery. Cf. Antonio Carlo and Edmondo M. Capecelatro, *Contro la Questione Meridionale* (Rome, 1975), p. 148, note 80, where there is a polemic with Foa. Yet, in this particular case, the "Foa paradox" is correct: the sheiks can only invest capital in the wealthy countries, since their economies are not geared to receive it and do not have any opportunity for adequate profits. Thus, Tanzer's prediction (*op.cit.*, pp. 134-135) according to which the sheiks can buy American industries and transform them into exporters of profits, as now happens for Third World industries colonized by the U.S. In a monopolistic economy based on profit, it is logical that capital goes from an underdeveloped to a developed country, and not the other way around. To reiterate: if the sheiks invest in rich countries, it is because they lack investment opportunities at home. This is true for oil revenues as well as for the profits that this revenue provides once invested in rich countries. Furthermore, to the extent that the sheiks purchase factories in the West, or become tied to them, they are conditioned by the fact that these are not neutral, but capitalist factories, which function according to the logic of profit so that the prices of their products must be profitable.

60. "Ou va l'Argent Arabe," in *Annuaire Jeune Afrique*, 1975, pp. 358-359. The anonymous

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As can be seen, these sweeping actions go from automobiles to insurance, from banks to nuclear plants, from airlines to steel tubing, from real estate speculation to imperialist investment in poor countries and to treasury notes from rich countries. But if the Shah and the sheiks become the owners of Krupp, a part of Pan American or Eurodif, or of banks that finance these industrial enterprises, it will become difficult for them to use the oil price-hike lever. The Arab-Iranian interests in advanced capitalism have become so enormous (even if relatively rare in the form of direct ownership), that if they act in such a way as to further shock the Western economy, they run the risk of being left under its ruins. In fact, the petrodollars have to be recycled to a large extent in the Western economy or with its collaboration (referring to the common investments in poor countries with the collaboration of imperialist countries), and, if the Western economy collapses, petrodollars become so much scrap paper. Of course, only some of these go directly to industry (another part gets there through the banks), but there is no question that industry is the basis of the Western system. If industry drowns, it is the system that sinks to the bottom and with it the possibility for recycling petrodollars. Symptomatic of this is a recent declaration of the Sultan of Qatar: "We decided to reduce oil production in Qatar many months ago, and this has nothing to do with a reduction in demand from industrialized countries. We became aware that our revenues were greater than what we could absorb."[61] The Qatar situation is still relatively exceptional. But if productive stagnation in the West becomes epidemic, the problem in Qatar would become so generalized that it could not be resolved by reducing oil production, which would then block industrial production in the rich countries along with any possibility for recycling. At this point, if it is desirable to recycle, it is necessary to stimulate the advanced countries by reducing their production costs, i.e., by reducing oil prices. As we shall see, this is a tendency already in progress.

The shared interest of the Arabs and the Iranians in the advanced capitalist countries marks, therefore, a tendency toward re-equilibrium. Though the increase in oil prices has heavily hit Western industry, it has also brought a massive flow of investments to the West creating ties, even if mostly

author of this article seeks to underplay the role of the Arabs as partners in enterprises by pointing out that rich countries seek above all to take on a role of bankers or financiers. This is partly true but, as indicated, the Western filter has not prevented in some cases the acquisition of parts of important enterprises. Furthermore, another extremely important type of participation, which *Jeune Afrique* ignores, should be pointed out: Iranian participation in the consortium Eurodif, for the enrichment of uranium (cf. Grossi, *Iran, op.cit.*, pp. 39-40). At any rate, both as partners as well as in the more diffuse form of bankers and financiers, the Arabs and the Iranians are increasingly interested, in a subaltern way, in the destinies and the economies of Western industries (which are the foundations for these economies) and this determines the previously mentioned phenomena. This happened before the crisis, since even then the petrodollars ended up in the West. With the crisis, however, the increase in the volume of petrodollars makes a qualitative leap. The Arabs' Western interests become no less important than their own interests in the defense and increase of oil prices.

61. Cf. Philippe Simmonot, "En Première Ligne sur le Front du Pétrole," in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. 160, p. 15.

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indirect,[62] between the Arabs and Western industry. For this reason it will become difficult in the future for the sheik to think only about oil prices. His interests as an oil producer will be weighed against his growing interests as a copartner in Western industry and in the Western economy.

We have here a relatively new phenomenon in the history of economics (at least in terms of its dimensions) which we could call the "reverse combination": in monopoly capital, it is the sector with the lower rate of profit that seeks to combine itself to that with the higher rate, in order to restore equilibrium.[63] Here, instead, it is the capital produced by a sector with an extremely high rate of profit that tends to migrate towards other less favorable sectors, in spite of the fact that in its original sector profits are still very high. Thus, it happens that the Shah or the Arab states become concerned for those industries hit by the oil crisis (such as Mercedes and Pan American) and that Arab banks, who are reluctant to give loans to the big oil companies beset with very few financing problems, would in one way or another give at least a part of this money to industry. The support of Western governments for Arab banks is justified by the former's attempts to recycle petrodollars in productive circuits, without, however, letting the Arabs assume dominant partnership positions.

This situation leads to a tendency to equalize the rate of profit in the sense that if high prices and other oil profits are obstacles to the recycling of petrodollars, or to Arab interests which consolidate in other sectors through recycling, it will be necessary to reduce the oil sector's prices and profits. Thus, the oil weapon will be no longer useful in a disruptive manner. The sheiks are prisoners of their own victory: they are richer, of course, but they are ever more enslaved by the Western economy.

One could say that within capitalism there really is an invisible hand which balances all, and there certainly are some restabilization mechanisms, or such an anarchical economy would explode. But it is necessary not to exaggerate the power of certain more or less spontaneous equalization factors.[64] This also occurs because of the phenomenon of the reverse combination. The Shah, the sheiks, and King Khaled do not seem very interested in small enterprises; they look at nuclear plants, at American or English treasury notes, Japanese contracts, big real estate speculations, Krupp, Mercedes, Mannesmann, and Pan Am. They also create banks, but these deal mostly with big solid clients, with whom they share ties and partnership interests, while they neglect,

62. Because of previously mentioned reasons, the Arabs and the Iranians do not participate directly, but lend funds or constitute banks for this purpose. Consequently, a small part of petrodollars ends up as aid for poor countries (see M. Duteil, "Monté en Flèche de l'aide au Développement," in *Jeune Afrique*, no. 779, pp. 36ff., where the data are provided). As Duteil herself admits, this aid meets specific political and economic interests, and the sums provided in 1974 have only covered 60 percent of the increase of oil expenses in poor countries.

63. See Rudolf Hilferding, *Il Capitale Finanziario* (Milan, 1961), pp. 302ff.

64. Elsewhere I have noted that the equalization of the rate of profit is in a monopoly system a disproportionate equalization, occurring only among those who are already rich, while marginal sectors (agriculture, small- and medium-sized enterprises) do not benefit from it. Cf. Carlo, "Towards a Redefinition of Imperialism," *op.cit.*

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comparatively speaking, the smaller enterprises that are not very efficient and lack adequate guarantees.[65] Thus, equalization functions in an unequal way: agriculture and small or medium-sized industry will pay more for the energy that they consume, producing revenues for the sheiks which are then recycled in the "high" spheres of the Western economy. There is equalization on the one hand, and an increase in imbalances on the other, accompanied by the development of unpredictable socio-economic tensions.

*The Recovery of the Imperialist System: Inflation*

The Western economy therefore reacted swiftly to the shock of the oil price increase. But recycling was not the only means for recovery. The other, no less deadly, is inflation. Between the end of 1973 and September 1975, the prices of Western industrial products acquired by Third World countries increased by 35 percent, which means that in real terms a third of the oil price went up in smoke. Earlier, it took 15 years to realize a similar erosion (1955-70): now, little more than 20 months were sufficient. If this trend continues, in about five years we could return in real terms to the situation of October 1973; counting the adjustment made by the OPEC countries in September 1975 (an increase of only 10 percent) and hypothesizing that every two years oil prices will rise by 10 percent in response to an increase of 30-35 percent in the price of industrial goods, the recovery should occur at the outside within seven or eight years.

The OPEC countries have no real defense against inflation. There have been proposals of the so-called price-indexing, but it is not practical—not for technical reasons, as Grossi erroneously claims,[66] but for structural reasons. The lack of technical tools for control over price-hiking decisions of the multinational industrials would not actually prevent the oil-producing countries from responding with oil-price increases equivalent to industrial price increases. Theoretically, in Vienna, in September 1975, the price of oil could have been increased by 35 percent (and it appears that the OPEC hawks did propose this), yet the price only increased by 10 percent. Closer to the truth is Kapp, who writes: "If the Shah of Iran decided to index the price of his oil with that of the factories he wants to build, this price would almost double in a year. In a recent interview in *Business Week*, he has indicated that the cost for a petrochemical complex had gone from $1 billion to $8 billion in one year. But, above all, price-indexing makes real sense only if it is not destined to become immediately without an object: knowing that the prices of raw materials would increase as a consequence, the importing countries of raw materials would limit price increases of industrial products that they export. But the leaders of big Western countries know that they are not able to

65. Everywhere small- and medium-sized enterprises are in poor shape or in a subaltern position to large monopolies—which determines their economic weakness. Cf. Paul Sweezy and Harry Magdoff, "The Merger Movement: A Study in Power," in *Monthly Review*, 21:2 (June, 1969), pp. 3ff.

66. See Grossi, *Iran, op.cit.*, pp. 35-36.

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control inflation and that price-indexing in practice therefore risks accelerating the inflationary spiral. For example, the control of export prices for the Third World would lead certain manufacturers of capital goods (of heavy industry, in particular) to extract from the internal market the excess profits that they normally extract from developing countries. Thus, price-indexing risks costing dearly in terms of inflation."[67] In other words, there is the risk that an increase in the price of oil could lead to a nightmarish inflationary spiral in which oil price increases lead to industrial price increases, and so on. This risk is a certainty. Kapp observes that the heads of Western states know that they cannot control inflation and in fact do not control it.[68] The reason for this impossibility is very simple: the manipulation of cartel prices is one of the fundamental defense tools for monopolistic profits in the present phase of capitalism: when a monopolistic sector producing certain goods sees the raw materials it acquires increase in price and reduce its profits, it has no choice but to increase the prices of its own products. If it doesn't, its rate of profit inevitably falls and this, in a competitive system, means the end in the long run. Thus, the oilmen's stance is absurd: they claim to operate within the bounds of a capitalist economy, but refuse others the right to defend their own profits.

Aside from its illogical aspect, such a stance is not practically realizable. Thus, two possibilities follow. The first and simpler one is a confrontation consisting of reciprocal price increases: the inflationary spiral that devours its own tail. To hope that the industrial producers would give in first is absurd because of what has been stated: it would be like asking them to become marginal and crushed. In a short time, then, impossible inflationary levels would be reached and from stagnation-recession, the situation would precipitate a great collapse (like that of 1929), which for the sheiks would mean the impossibility of recycling and a drastic reduction of revenues due to the crisis-induced increase in demand. But at a time when they are increasingly binding themselves to the Western economy's fate, they cannot seriously desire a situation of this type. When authoritative spokesmen for Arab moderates say that they will act with a sense of responsibility toward the world economy, they are aware that if the palace crumbles, the throne of the Shah and the turban of Yamani will both be covered by the rubble. The extremely moderate decision of September 1975 is proof of the weight that this knowledge has on OPEC's policy. The latter understands that it cannot

67. See Bernard Kapp, "Le Prix du Dialogue Nord-Sud," in *Economia*, no. 18, p. 13.

68. The historical tendency of monopoly capitalism is towards increases in prices. See Harry Magdoff, "A Note on Inflation," in *Monthly Review*, 25:7 (December, 1973), pp. 25-26; and Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital* (New York, 1966), pp. 56-64. This results from the fact that the control exercised on the market by the monopolies is such as to allow them to set prices rather than having to accept them. This remains true even in a declining market, where there is stagflation (stagnation plus inflation), which reverses the traditional behavior of 19th century capitalist economies, and is explainable only in terms of the monopoly control of prices. See P. Sylos Labini, *Economie Capitalistiche ed Economie Pianificate* (Bari, 1960), pp. 123ff.

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prevent the substantial recovery (through inflation) of Western countries and of industry.

The second possibility might be that described by Kapp: Western states, under pressure from OPEC, would impose price controls upon goods exported to oil-producing countries. It would be necessary, however, to permit Western producers to make up the loss internally, which would mean an explosive inflation with unpredictable consequences, and which would still make the Western economic palace crumble on the heads of the sheiks, as in the first hypothesis. If, then, prices were also blocked internally, the consequence would be those reserved to the history of price controls: faced with the threat of the block of industrial production (the strike of investments) because it is no longer profitable, the Western states and the sheiks would have to soften, being unable to withstand the blackmail. Thus, there is no way out, and the recovery leads many experts to foresee that a deficit in the oil countries' balance of payments will recur shortly.[69] On the other hand, the reduction of real oil revenues and the difficulty of recycling petrodollars in a stagnant economy could push the Arabs to reduce prices in order to give more breathing space to the Western economy (in which they have an interest) and to increase stales whose stagnation, combined with inflation in the prices of industrial goods and with the impossibility of responding to them with parallel oil price increases, might drastically shrink the mountain of petrodollars during the next four or five years.

Above we referred to Qatar's reduced production. Well, other Arab states took this opportunity to increase their sales, giving discounts on OPEC prices, to the great consternation of Algeria, a hawk *par excellence.*[70] This conflict indicates the existence of two difficulties for oil producers: the one of recycling, which led Qatar to reduce production, and that of increasing revenues, whose real value diminishes as a result of inflation. These contradictions do not move among states, but within each Arab state, in the sense that everyone earns too much and too little. Too much with respect to the possibility of recycling in a stagnant economy (that of rich countries); too little with respect to galloping inflation which threatens to rapidly bring about a deficit in their balance of payments. Obviously, with respect to the policies of every state, one or the other contradiction becomes more salient, with the result of the diverging paths of Qatar and of its neighbors. But the two problems (recycling and inflation) concern more or less everyone, because they are a result of common difficulties. A short-term solution (the structural flaws of imperialism are not resolved with a few patch-up measures) could be a reduction in prices which on the one hand would permit increasing sales, counterbalancing the price reduction, and on the other hand would stimulate industrial economies, favoring a kind of recovery which may permit recycling petrodollars more easily. We have seen that some states are moving in this direction: the very decision in Vienna to

69. Cf. "Ou va l'Argent Arabe," *op.cit.*
70. See Simmonot, *op.cit.*

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raise prices by a mere 10 percent has in fact meant a reduction in price in real terms of about 25 percent. And immediately afterward, the press mentioned Saudi Arabia's refusal to enforce the increase in question. Rumors of under-the-counter discounts continued to circulate undaunted even during October-November 1975, and thus after the September decisions. Openly or privately, legally or illegally, this tendency seems to be present, if only in the form of the real price erosion undergone and accepted by OPEC. Practically, however, the importing countries' balance of payments and economies are not sensitive to the discounts conceded by some OPEC countries because the companies charge the formal cartel price of OPEC, keeping the discounts for themselves. (This has given rise to ferocious polemics.) Therefore, it seems that between the OPEC countries and the companies who do not have the same problems as the Arabs (or not to the same degree), a situation has evolved which is the reverse of that of the 1960s, when it was the producing countries who asked for increases and the companies who opposed these requests.

*Three Efforts to Develop: Venezuela, Iran, Algeria*

Despite the present recovery, it can be said that in these years of price increases (even if rapidly eroded by inflation) there has occurred and is still occurring (even if reduced every year) a substantial transfer of wealth to the oil countries' ruling elites. A part of oil revenues does not ever leave the Western countries. This applies to most of Saudi Arabia's revenues, those of the Emirates and of Kuwait.[71] In addition to rentier countries, there are others, however, in which even before October 1973 there had been attempts to develop industrially and which today are trying to develop on a very different capital base (at least in the short- and medium-run).

This is the case in particular for Venezuela, Iran and Algeria. Different in their culture, history and political structure, these countries also differ in their economic and petroleum strength: Iran and Venezuela are ranked second and third in exporting after Saudi Arabia, while Algeria is ranked eighth or ninth, with oil revenues in 1973 being only 17.5 percent of those of Saudi Arabia.[72] Venezuela presents itself as a bourgeois-democratic country, with a fairly well-developed bourgeoisie (compared to the backwardness of the country) and with foolish reformist ambitions

71. Kuwait represents a particular case among Arab states: it recycled its petrodollars in the West well ahead of the 1973 crisis (as other *rentier* states), but with the crumbs of oil revenues it pursued at home a policy of opulent under-development, in the sense that it reserved for its inhabitants lucrative activities (paid through its oil), while other activities were left to a poorly paid proletariat imported from nearby countries (cf. Halliday, *op.cit.*, pp. 431ff). Apparently, the high per capital income in the statistics does not correspond to poverty, as in other oil states, but the well-being of the very small local population. Yet, the fact remains that the country has a dependent structure, since it has no profitable economic activities able to absorb oil revenues. If the age of oil were to end, either because of physical exhaustion or because of the substitution of oil with other more economical resources, this state of dependence, today masked by well-being, would crudely come to light.

72. See *Annuaire Jeune Afrique, op.cit.*, p. 142.

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reminiscent of the Fei's efforts in the 1960s. Iran represents another example of the autocratic road to capitalism, not altogether new in the history of economics. In Algeria, instead, the State is not at the service of the bourgeoisie as in Iran or Venezuela, but is itself the main agent of an economy which, despite substantial capitalist residues, has the predominant characteristics of bureaucratic collectivism.[73] These three attempts are all destined to fail, proving once again that within the context of imperialism there exists an iron law of underdevelopment.

*The Venezuelan Case*

Venezuela offers an economic structure which, except for some differences (mineral riches, the lack of a state heavy industry), is reminiscent in many respects of that of Southern Italy.[74] The marked contrast between agriculture and industry has led to a serious depopulation of rural areas and to a deficit in the agricultural balance of trade, in spite of the country's natural wealth. As for industry, around 1968, 87.7 percent of factories had an employment capacity of less than 30 workers each, and the majority of those built from 1959 to 1963 were accessory undertakings of colonial establishments, destined to refine partially-finished products from abroad. They employed little personnel and contributed very little to the solution of the serious unemployment problem.[75]

More than ten years later, Hazera was to find a practically identical situation: six large monopolistic groups dominate industry in a strictly subordinate relationship to foreign capital, surrounded by small or medium-sized industries which survive to a large extent thanks to the funds of the "Providential State"; a very low employment rate (in 1973, there were 3.1 million people employed out of a population of 11.5 million—i.e., around 28 percent), largely engaged in tertiary activities of a parasitic nature, created by the State to compensate for some of the glaring problems.[76]

The consequence of high levels of unemployment and inflation (15-20 percent per year during the last years) is the choking of consumption, which has repercussions on production (in recent years, the average rate of nonutilization of Venezuelan productive capacity has been 45 percent). The only consoling feature in this panorama would seem to be the fact that, according to a U.N. expert, the rate of profit on investments is fairly high, around 25 percent.[77] But this rate is not an average and clearly refers only to leading

73. For a discussion of bureaucratic collectivism, see Antonio Carlo, "The Socio-Economic Nature of the USSR," *Telos*, 21 (Fall 1974), pp. 2-86.

74. The data for Venezuela are taken, with a few exceptions, from Jean Claude Hazera, "Venezuela: le Plus Vieux des Nouveaux Riches," in *Economia*, no. 12, pp. 40ff.; and A. Silva Michelina, "Richesse et Aliénation," in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. 206, pp. 21ff.

75. M. Cambieses Donoso, *Venezuela O.K.* (Rome, 1964), p. 67.

76. The phenomenon of marginalization through relegation to the tertiary sector is rather old in Venezuela. See A. Cordova, *Inversiones Extranieras y Subdesarrollo* (Caracas, 1973), pp. 188ff.

77. See B. Cassen, "Des Succès Diplomatique sans écho à l'interieur," in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. 255, p. 30.

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businesses, or to those particular opportunities for investment which attract foreign capital. In effect, if the average rate of profit were indeed so favorable, then foreign capital entering the country attracted by profitable earnings would presumably reinvest its profits locally. Instead, as is well known, this does not happen in Latin America, where a recent investigation of a sample of multinationals showed that they send back to the original investing countries profit returns greater than capital investment by a minimum of 44.2 percent to a maximum of 962.1 percent (average 136.3 percent), and it is not the case that Venezuela is an exception to the politics of theft, typical of the imperialism to which it has been subjected.[78]

The Venezuelan government's policy is aimed at striking a blow at these stifling activities in various ways: agriculture will receive 2 billion bolivars (one bolivar equals one French franc) in subsidies. Silva Michelena has observed, however, that the flaw in Venezuelan agriculture (normal flaw in the era of monopolies) is the unequal exchange between agricultural and industrial products, i.e., the colonial-industrial exploitation of agriculture, and that if this situation does not stop, nothing can substantially change.[79] But such a situation is inherent in a monopoly system.

With respect to industry, the State has two policies: support for little and medium-sized industry (but not only for that) and an attempt to construct a state heavy industry to guarantee the country's economic independence (this is the sector that attracts little private capital). But, in order to be efficient from a capitalist viewpoint, these state industries in the sector of capital goods, a more capital intensive sector than average, have to have a high organic composition of capital. This risks favoring what Celso Furtado called the tropical plant effect:[80] the big enterprise transplanted in underdeveloped areas monopolizes the resources of the area (i.e., capital and the best work force), drying up small enterprises. Being less efficient, small and medium-sized industry is a relatively little appreciated client for the banks, while higher salaries in big enterprises attract the more skilled workers. Big enterprises thus work like those large tropical trees which, in spreading their roots in the soil, absorb all the water and make small surrounding plants die. This policy increases unemployment and strangles consumption. Even support and subsidies for small and medium-sized industry tend to have negative results. Subsidies can permit small and medium-sized industry to survive as such, but the results are permanently fragmented labor intensive activities which are not very competitive from an economic standpoint and are permanently tied to state generosity; or instead, the small enterprise may make the jump to the level of big enterprise, but this necessitates labor saving and capital intensive technologies, which in a country where only 28 percent of the population works (the acceptable level for an advanced country begins at 40 percent), cannot but lead to negative consequences and

78. See R. Muller, *The New Sovrains, op.cit.*, p. 65; and Donoso, *op.cit.*, pp. 69ff.
79. See A. Silva Michelina, *op.cit.*
80. Celso Furtado, *Obstacles to Development in Latin America* (New York, 1970), p. 23.

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underdevelopment.

There is a vicious cycle: in order to increase employment, one has to develop industry and consumption (i.e., the demand for industrial goods), and reduce the pathological rates of nonutilization of factories. If, however, one undertakes an efficient policy of industrial modernization, indispensable to its capitalistic development,[81] the already depressed levels of employment must fall and the mutual strangling between productive and consumptive capacity increases. Nor can it be hypothesized that present-day Venezuela can undertake a developmental model in stages, of the form described by Lenin in Czarist Russia (and undertaken by Japan), i.e., a development of sector A of industry (capital goods) followed by a subsequent development of sector B (consumer goods), with a certain compression of consumption in the first phase. Such a model presupposes a scarcity of capital, and therefore the necessity to initially impose the policy of making the masses tighten their belts. The Venezuelan case is different: according to Tanzer's calculations, in 1974, with a production of 2.9 million barrels of oil daily, the government cashed in approximately $21 million a day.[82] With a population a little larger than one-third that of Iran, Venezuela has per capital oil revenues equal to or superior than those of Iran. In such a situation, Venezuela's problem in the short and medium run is the abundance of capital, not its scarcity. When capital is not being invested at home or is sent abroad (and for a country with a weak economic structure, this is not conducive to development), it becomes useless paper.

Given these facts, Venezuela could and had to attempt a different road, of a reformist type, and it is not accidental that President Perez attempted to sustain consumption through various measures: establishment of a minimum wage (15 bolivars), and a request to enterprises that they hire 5 percent more workers and increase salaries by 20 percent. Yet, these measures were inadequate: 100,000 more jobs (the request of 5 percent) are a drop in the bucket. Nevertheless, they were sufficient to touch off a strong reaction on the part of Venezuelan owners, hit in their basic interests (the defense of profits). If the Perez administration wanted to continue in this vein, it would run the risk of discouraging investment.

In addition, any salary increases are literally eaten up by inflation, hitting not only the working class, which in some ways can defend itself in a bourgeois-democratic regime (through strikes), but also other social groups (marginal workers, shopkeepers, private citizens, etc.), who do not have this weapon. All of this intensifies the tendency to stifle consumption. Moreover, inflation is largely a result of the international system in which the country is a part. In 1973, for example, imports of industrial machines consisted of 23.5 percent of all imported goods, to which can be added another 14.9 percent

81. The Chinese line, aimed at the development of small and medium industry, is not practical in capitalist countries precisely because it is not based on a logic of profit. See Antonio Carlo, "Autenticità e Contraddizioni del Socialismo in Cina," *Terzo Mondo*, no. 30.

82. Tanzer, *op.cit.*, p. 126.

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for automobiles and replacement parts, and another 15.3 percent for other finished products, while oil constituted 94.2 percent of all exports.

If the State accelerates its policy of supporting industry in the short run, it will be necessary to increase the importation of capital goods and industrial goods. Consequently, inflation comes to Venezuela through the balance of trade (in addition to internal causes of the phenomenon which are serious and deep-rooted), given the dizzying price increases of industrial goods for which the oil countries have no remedy. Thus, Perez' reformist policies clash with a series of inextricable knots, of which the last but certainly not the least important is the recovery of national wealth. The law dealing with the nationalization of oil contains a rule (article 5) which permits the state to "reach agreements of association with private corporations if partnership is such as to guarantee the state's control for a specific duration." The rule, inserted in the government project at the last moment, was a result of a specific request from Venezuelan owners, who very clearly stated that the country could not do without foreign collaboration: as a result, private trusts have already been created which in fact deprive the state of authority to effectively direct the oil sector.[83] But oil is not an exception: even the December 7, 1974 law for the recovery of iron contained the same deception.

Underlying these events is the Venezuelan bourgeoisie's own admission that it cannot do without the cooperation of imperialism. The integration of a subordinated Latin American bourgeoisie into the imperialist system, as has been argued by leftist Latin American sociologists,[84] has been amply demonstrated by the advent of Venezuelan nationalizations.

*The Iranian Case*

That Iran is preparing to enter the restricted circle of the great industrial and imperialist powers is one of the more widespread commonplaces of recent years. In reality, Iran provides the clearest demonstration that underdevelopment is a matter of structure and not of petrodollars. When the latter are poured off into old structures, they merely make a hole in the water and this is what is happening in Iran.

"Yes, of course, my tie is French, I smoke American cigarettes, I drive a Mercedes, and my shoes are Italian. But tomorrow all this will be Iranian, made in Iran." This statement made to Marcel Barang by a young Iranian epitomizes the dreams of development of the country's ruling class: $69 billion invested for the five-year period from 1973 to 1977, 1.8 million new jobs (1.4 million new ones and 400,000 converted ones), 20 nuclear plants by 1990, 15 million tons of steel, and 2 million automobiles by 1983, at the end of the sixth five-year program.[85] Thus, it is a development in forced stages which are, for the same reasons as in Venezuela, simultaneous (sector A and

83. On this, see B. Cassen, "L'Article 5 de la Loi du Nationalisation et le Défi Pétrolier," in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, no. 260, p. 20.

84. Theodor Dos Santos, *La Nuova Dipendenza* (Milan, 1971), and Andre Gunder Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution?* (Turin, 1971).

85. Quoted by Barang, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

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Sector B of industry). This becomes clear from the objectives of 1983: automobiles and steel.

The situation, however, is more contradictory than for Venezuela. In fact, to produce 2 million cars, it is necessary to sell them to someone, and here the discrepancy between the capacity for accumulation and the capacity for consumption appears very sharply. 53 percent of the population lives in rural areas, under archaic and miserable conditions, and in the next 20 years, that percentage will fall by only 8 percent, while 72 percent of the families have an income below subsistence level. Present tendencies will not change the picture: the ruling class's policy of efficient industrialization is a mandatory transition, not an unnecessary device, as some maintain.[86]

International inflation that devours even the substantial oil revenues cannot be combatted: the program's failure to consider the phenomenon of inflation, more than an act of irresponsible adventurism, is the expression of a recognition of its own limits. Inflation coming from industrial countries cannot be controlled. It is necessary to move quickly: hence the policy of extremely rapid industrialization, moving from steel to automobiles in the shadow of nuclear plants.

Industrialization of this sort, however, requires a very high employment of capital: one does not build nuclear plants only to encircle them with small hand-loom factories. But this implies a low employment dynamic. The transferral of the work-force from rural areas proceeds fairly slowly, and employment levels are stagnant: in 1977, 9.7 million inhabitants should be working out of a total population of 35.4 million. This is a blatant case of underevaluation of the actual active population, which seeks to hide actual unemployment. According to more realistic estimates by government opponents, the active population should be around 17.5 million in 1976, equivalent to 50 percent.[87] This is by no means an extraordinary fact, since there are capitalist countries (Japan), bureaucratic collective ones (USSR), and socialist ones (mainland China), where rates of employment equivalent to 47-50 percent of the population are or have been normal. At the end of 1977, therefore, Iran's occupational levels will continue to be similar to Southern Italy's, a fact aggravated by the import of 700,000 better-paid and more skilled workers from the foreign market (since native workers cannot be trained in only a few years), with foreseeable negative effects on the balance of payments. In addition, some of these 9.7 million active workers, maybe even half, will be deployed in an archaic agricultural system, i.e., it will be an underemployed population (hidden unemployment) whose incomes will therefore be very low. As for inflation, which no matter how minimized by the government has weighed heavily on the popular budget, it cannot but be substantially increased in connection with the international situation: in addition to oil, in 1974 Iran exported $600 milion worth of goods and imported $6.5 billion, resulting in a frightening trade deficit, as a result of

86. See Grossi, *Iran, op.cit.*, p. 39.
87. Cf. P. Vieille and H. Banisads, *Pétrole et Violence* (Paris, 1974), p. 111.

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goods purchased at skyrocketing prices. Thus, we are faced with the same strangleholds that block consumption in Venezuela, rendered more serious by the country's backwardness, by a greater scarcity of technical expertise, by the absence of political rights and trade unions that would permit workers to defend their consumer goods and their wages. Once again, the question can be raised: to whom will they be able to sell two million cars every year?

Even by resorting to the American method of sales by installments, the underlying poverty of the great majority of the population represents an insurmountable barrier: one cannot get into debt in the American fashion with the major part of the population having an income below the subsistence level. This is known by the Iranian leaders, who openly recognize the need to export. Such a pretense, however, is simply mad: the Western market is glutted and ferociously competitive, while the Fourth World countries are more in debt than ever and can buy very little. Thus, it is likely that Iranian automobiles would pile up and rust in the factory lot. In addition, if they wish to build and export automobiles, they cannot increase the costs involved in using this product (i.e., oil) without resulting in a compression of the possibilities for expanded consumption in an already glutted market. This constitutes a further weakness in Iran's defense of its hoard of petrodollars against worldwide inflation.

Lastly, a look at agriculture. Underdevelopment in this sector, normal and insurmountable in capitalism, is even more troublesome for Iran than for Venezuela: the agricultural deficit reached $4.5 billion in 1975. This means that agricultural inadequacies absorb a large portion of petrodollars every year. The Iranian plan neglects agriculture: to rapidly industrialize it is necessary to let agriculture drop more and more behind. Caught in the midst of worldwide inflation, the agricultural deficit and the necessity to "purchase" expensive foreign personnel, Iran risks going bankrupt. Most probably we will not come to see the absurdity of two million rusting automobiles piled in front of the factory gates: the Iranian system will collapse before 1983.

*The Algerian Case*

Algeria presents an economic structure characterized by state-ownership of the major industrial enterprises, acting on the basis of a very centralized system whose objectives, fixed by the plan, are expressed in physical terms, and in which relations among sectors (prices) are regulated in administrative terms. Even the priorities of the plan (heavy industry occupies a more privileged position than agriculture, i.e., than consumer goods)[88] seem

88. R. Marconis, *op.cit.*, p. 146, speaks about industrial investments consisting of 45 percent of the total (primarily in heavy industry) and three times that of agricultural investment (15 percent). The second plan provides more space to agriculture, but without altering basic assumptions. In fact, the second plan assigns 48 percent of the total investments to industry. See *Annuaire Jeune Afrique*, 1975, p. 142. On the enormous weight of investments in the Algerian model, see also G. Migliardi, "Senza Precedenti in Algeria gli Investimenti per il 1976," in *Unità* of January 1, 1976, p. 12, where investments for 1976 are given as 40 percent of the gross national product! As in the USSR, the consumer is not given a great deal of consideration by the planners.

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similar to policies characteristic of bureaucratic collectivist structures in Eastern European countries.

This has led to a series of difficulties akin to those of the latter countries, who use similar methods and relations. Thus, lately a reform has been undertaken aimed at mitigating economic criteria and physical criteria (in a manner not unlike Eastern European countries after 1965). There has also been talk of democratizing the industrial structure, meant to bring about effective participation for workers in the management of the enterprises. As Hazera points out, however, the workers' powers are not clear. This is not surprising: industrial democratization does not occur through benevolent decrees granted from above by a managing elite, but it is a conquest stemming from below, and thus it is clear that, when certain "conquests" fall from above, they are cloudy, mystifying, partial and contradictory.

The situation in rural areas is analogous. There, relations between the State and the peasant masses are reminiscent of those between the State and the *kolkhoz* in the USSR. That sector of agricultural enterprises which was self-managed, in the second half of the 1960s, appeared even to defenders of the Algerian system to be a State sector and, moreover, to be badly managed and in need of internal democratization.[89]

Very recently Hazera has pointed out that the workers of the "self-managed" sector, which covers about one third of the cultivatable land, act as if they were wage-workers, i.e., as alienated persons who do not consider the enterprises their own. In other words, Algerian self-management functions like Soviet *kolkhosian* democracy. The relationship between city and countryside, however, remains in some respects capitalist. For the flight of the "beneficiaries" of agrarian reforms from rural to urban areas results from the attraction of higher urban incomes. In the Soviet system, depopulation of the countryside was specified by the plan, since its industrialization was labor intensive and required the transformation of *mugiki* into workers. But in Algeria, depopulation of the countryside clashed with planners' policies, and therefore they attempted to control it.

Because of the low level of agricultural productivity, the exodus from the countryside inhibits agricultural production, thereby increasing agriculture's foreign trade deficit—a deficit which already eats up one third of the country's not exceptional oil revenues. The government attempts to react with a policy of concentrating the agricultural masses in villages nearby particular social services. Such a policy, however, is destined to fail: the exodus from the countryside is a result of the fact that urban incomes are higher. To arrest it, therefore, it would be necessary to go to the root, with a policy for agricultural development and for modernization of the backward sector. In practice, this would mean overturning the plan's priorities and renouncing rapid industrialization, with an abandonment of the goal to reach industrial autonomy in a short time. But the governing class knows that oil reserves and

89. See T. Tidafi, *L'Agricolture Algerienne et ses Perspectives de Développement* (Paris, 1969), p. 104.

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oil revenues are limited and that the era of relative abundance will not last long. This is why they chose the policy of "industrialization against time," which should lead to a take-off before 1985. In this framework of super-industrialization on the basis of the Soviet Union model, nothing is left but to concentrate the peasants in order to better control them. To the extent that this policy does not resolve the problem of the exodus at its roots, it runs the risk of being reduced to a series of coercive or bureaucratic measures against the peasants—measures which will certainly not stimulate agricultural productivity. (This has been shown by the experience of centralist economies which dealt with the peasant question bureaucratically.) For this reason, the balance of payments deficit, far from diminishing, will increase.

The first snag in the Algerian program, then, is in the agricultural deficit. The other is the previously emphasized one: worldwide inflation. To realize their designs, Algerians need to buy a lot in the West, and are therefore among the most eager supporters of price-indexing—the hawks *par excellence* in OPEC. Their modest oil revenues make them feel the consequences of inflation much sooner than others do. Since there is no remedy for inflation, every year the base of Algerian accumulation undergoes a net reduction. One of the presuppositions of the Algerian policy (the defense of oil revenues in real terms) is thus fundamentally challenged: development cannot be seriously planned when the base of accumulation is subject to the actions of an uncontrollable and unpredictable variable of considerable importance. The country's meager oil revenues, rather than Islamic nationalism, explains why the Algerians pursue a policy of training their own personnel on the job.

Unlike the Iranians, they cannot afford the luxury of paying plush salaries to hundreds of thousands of technicians from the West. This, however, generates some inconveniences. Hazera writes: "It is evident that the effort of training personnel on the job, which seems to be one of the main results during the first years of industrialization, has its price—and a very heavy price at that. In Ruiba there are estimates that it amounts to 10 percent of total investments... The economic and social council had tried to appraise its cost in an already slightly out-dated report. A delay of 12 months for a global investment of 4 billion dinars implies a total overhead cost of 1.5 billion dinars, of which a third is made up of lost earnings, and the rest stemming from increases in dockyard costs, price variations, financial costs, personnel costs, etc."[90]

In material terms, these delays have meant 400,000 tons of metal structural work instead of the 65,000 predicted for 1973, a million tons of cement instead of 1.9, and no farm tractors compared to the estimated 2,500 a year. With things as they are, we would be speaking of an economic miracle if industrialization succeeded. It may be, however, that the epoch of such miracles has past.

90. Hazera, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

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*Conclusions: Toward a Worsening of World Imbalances*

The above analysis must not lead one to think that the oil crisis was a giant flash in the pan and that in reality everything will remain as before. The new equilibrium that the capitalist system is creating will not restabilize the *status quo ante*: the equalizing tendencies operate in a contradictory manner. In fact, they intensify certain aspects of the old contradictions in the system and render it more unstable and less controllable. But the conflicts are not intensified only within the metropolis, but also in the relations between the latter and the poor, so-called Fourth World countries who feel it the most. The situation in these countries, heavily in debt, hit first by the oil price increase and then by the resulting price increases of finished products (they must import both), is becoming impossible, with unforeseeable social and economic consequences.

The costs of the present world crisis will fall heavily on the poorest countries. But this transfer of costs does not resolve the problem: the fact is that the old mechanism based on the automobile has exploded and a new one is not on the horizon. To accumulate at the expense of poor countries that know neither how nor what to produce does not make much sense, and is in some senses worse, because accumulated capital has to be invested in some way. The solution advanced by Samir Amin is not convincing:[91] according to him, capital can move in two ways, by decentralizing industry to poor countries and keeping vanguard technologies (nuclear power, etc.), or by intensifying present mechanisms. The first hypothesis, which for Amin is the most natural, does not stand up at all: it has been shown that attempts to industrialize even in countries full of petrodollars (Venezuela, Iran) clash against the insurmountable obstacles of present imperialist mechanisms. The second hypothesis is a given fact which our analysis supports, but it is not a solution. This highly conflicting mechanism is broken and does not seem to be reparable: to intensify it does not seem a way out. We are not faced with mythical hypotheses of collapse, but with the actual fact of an asphyxiated growth, tormented by endemic stagnation and by the continual danger of drastic reductions in production accompanied by social convulsions.

The good times of the boom are a memory: as the dust from the "oil crisis" dissipates, nothing will be as before, and everything will be worse than ever.

91. Cf. Samir Amin, "Towards a Structural Crisis of World Capitalism," in *Socialist Revolution*, 23 (April, 1975), pp. 24-26.

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# FROM SPAVENTA TO GRAMSCI

## by Paul Piccone

Writing in prison under his warden's careful scrutiny, Gramsci had to resort to using a code for whatever may have betrayed the profoundly political nature of his concerns. But the articulation of Marxism as "the philosophy of praxis" was more than merely a convenient paraphrase. It was an accurate characterization of his theoretical perspective as part of a long-standing tradition opposed to positivist, naturalist and scientistic deformations of Marxism. This tradition traced back not only to Antonio Labriola, who first vindicated historical materialism as a "philosophy of praxis" and a "philosophy of life" against his positivist contemporaries in the Socialist Party,[1] but to that broader nineteenth century Neapolitan neo-Hegelianism which, after an initial major impact during the Risorgimento in the 1850s and 1860s, was briefly eclipsed for a couple of decades by the positivism that is usually uncritically associated with rapid industrialization and scientific progress, only to explode again at the turn of the century to overwhelmingly dominate twentieth century Italian culture. Thus, except for what can be accurately described as "the positivist parentheses" in Italian culture,[2] there is an unbroken continuity between such major figures in the introduction of Hegelianism in Italy as De Sanctis and the Spaventa brothers (who were also Croce's uncles) and their students Jaja and Labriola (who were Gentile's and Croce's teachers), as well as Gramsci. The latter openly considered himself a Crocean as late as 1917, when he edited the short-lived journal *La Città Futura*,[3] and even a decade later, in prison, he considered Croce's work so important as to suggest that it would have been useful for a whole group of men to dedicate "ten years of activity in the writing of an Anti-Croce."[4]

The significance of this generally under-emphasized heritage[5] does not merely consist in that it provides useful background information. It is also a necessary condition to any understanding of Gramsci along the lines that he himself laid down for reconstructing the genesis and structure of the Italian

1. Cf. Antonio Labriola's letter to Sorel, dated May 14, 1897, and June 20, 1897, in *Socialism and Philosophy*, trans. Ernest Untermann (Chicago, 1907), p. 60 and p. 109.

2. Although this is the general interpretation of the period provided by the neo-idealist schools of Croce and Gentile, it remains sound in spite of objections from the left. Cf. Sergio Landucci, "L'Hegelismo in Italia nell'Età del Risorgimento," in *Studi Storici*, vol. VI (1965), p. 602.

3. Cf. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del Carcere*, edited by Valentino Gerratana (Turin, 1975), vol. II, p. 1233. Unfortunately, this part of the *Prison Notebooks* was omitted in the Hoare and Smith English edition (London, 1971).

4. *Ibid.*, p. 1234.

5. Three recent works attempting to map out the large and still growing numbers of Gramsci interpretations hardly mention this Hegelian heritage. Cf. Gianfranco Albertelli, ed., *Interpretazioni di Gramsci (1957-1975)* (Trento, 1976); Gian Carlo Jocteau, *Leggere Gramsci: Guida alle Interpretazioni* (Milan, 1975); and Tito Perlini, *Gramsci e il Gramscismo* (Milan, 1974).

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intelligentsia. Any study of Gramsci claiming continuity with his work must approach him from the dual perspective of a constantly rejuvenating *tradition* and the *specific* configuration that this takes in concrete historical situations. In fact, Gramsci's thought can be characterized as running along these two main parallel theoretical tracks: a re-elaboration of Marxism as the crowning point of Western thought presupposing the "Renaissance and Reformation, German philosophy and the French Revolution, Calvinism and English classical economics;"[6] and the constant historicist emphasis on the particular way in which this tradition lives and is practically articulated. This is why as early as 1917 Gramsci contraposed what he took to be Bolshevism as "the Marxist thought that never dies, which is the continuation of Italian and German idealist thought"[7] to the sclerotic doctrines sanctified by the Italian Socialist Party, and always emphasized the need to deal with social and political problems in their historical concreteness, in terms of that specificity which takes absolute precedence over and above any forced superimposition of abstract categorical schemes.[8] The multi-dimensional specificity of the lived cannot be reduced to well-packaged abstractions whose conceptual elegance hides whatever other processual relations they fail to capture. Abstractions and theoretical structures in general remain valid only as long as they do not lose sight of their social sources where they are created and re-created as mediations. This is the most fundamental trait of Gramsci's "absolute historicism" understood as "the absolute secularization and earthliness of thought."[9]

All of Gramsci's thought rotates around this: from his periodic attacks on cosmopolitanism understood as abstract universalism—or, in the Italian case, as the cultural expression of an otherwise non-existent national unity[10]—to

6. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 395.

7. Antonio Gramsci, "The Revolution against *Capital*," in Pedro Cavalcanti and Paul Piccone, eds., *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (St. Louis, 1975), p. 128. Here Gramsci extends to Marxism the Neapolitan neo-Hegelians' thesis of "the circulation of European thought" and, faithful to his historicist principles, he reconstitutes it in terms of the specificity of the socio-historical situation. More on this later.

8. Thus, for example, in 1918, in a party debate concerning Esperanto, Gramsci argued against its uncritical acceptance as the official party language as was being proposed: "Language is not just a means of communication: it is first of all a work of art, it is beauty... The international language would rather be a mechanism without the agility and the expressive possibilities of a spoken language; it would be a perfect and definitive mechanism, while expression is never definite since relations of thought change continually, the ideal of beauty is always shifting and only the spoken language can find in itself, or in other languages, the new nuances, the new verbal ties adequate to the new needs: it finds them in the past that it lives as renewed..." Cf. Luigi Ambrosoli, "Nuovi Contributi agli *Scritti Giovanili* di Gramsci," in *Rivista Storica del Socialismo*, III:10 (August, 1960), p. 548. Gramsci's point was that artificial efforts to introduce Esperanto *from above* are useless since "this process can only come about freely and spontaneously. Linguistic stimulus comes from the bottom up. Books have little influence concerning changes in ways of talking." See Gramsci's "Universal Language and Esperanto," in Cavalcanti and Piccone, *op.cit.*, p. 32. Also relevant here is Gramsci's implicit acceptance of the Croce-Vossler identification of language and art.

9. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 468.

10. Gramsci, *Quaderni del Carcere, op.cit.*, vol. I, p. 133. Cf. also vol. II, p. 866, where Gramsci contraposes Trotsky the "Cosmopolitan, i.e., superficially national and superficially Western or European," to Lenin, "profoundly national and profoundly European."

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his obsession with Croce and intellectuals in general. And it is clear why Gramsci's "absolute historicism" focused on the reconstruction of the tradition through a systematic study of the formation of Italian intellectuals and on a regrounding of this same tradition by means of a mercilesss critique of its major exponent (Croce) in the *Prison Notebooks*.[11] It is part of Gramsci's effort to explain the failure of post-WW I European revolutions and to investigate the conditions necessary for their future realization. Considering that all of Gramsci's works, along with those of other Marxist thinkers of the time, assumed that the conditions for revolution were present and that the main objective remaining was to organize "the subjective factor,"[12] it is understandable why Gramsci's analysis tended to focus on the reasons for the failure in the subjective domain and those responsible for its articulation: the intellectuals. But, as he himself knew very well, even before he began in prison his study of the reconstruction of the formation of Italian intellectuals, such a project was bound to remain unfinished or, at best, fragmentary.[13] As a result, in many respects, a reconstruction of Gramsci's thought presupposes a completion of this unfinished project: an understanding of both the Italian neo-Hegelian and socialist traditions, as well as the specific socio-historical conditions within which these traditions were to coalesce in Gramsci's Marxism.

*The Hegelian Heritage*

Of course, Hegelianism has had considerable influence in almost all cultures but, with the possible exception of Poland,[14] nowhere as massively or for the same reasons as in Italy. Thus, in Germany, immediately following Hegel's death, it typically split into conservative right-Hegelianism and the liberal left-wing Hegelians. Orthodox Marxist interpretations such as Lukács' explain this development in terms of the peaking of the progressive role of the bourgeoisie and the rise of the Marxist alternative in the wake of the ensuing decadence of bourgeois culture. The subsequent late nineteenth century retreat from Hegel in German thought is thus seen as an attempt to avoid the inevitable Marxist outcome and, eventually, a preparation for Fascism and Nazism.[15] Whatever the shortcoming of this thesis, it remains the case that, save for occasional flashes (such as the works of Bloch, Lukács, the Frankfurt

11. As Garin put it, "The problem of the intellectuals was not...one among various arguments in the prison problematic: it was the nexus around which everything came to rotate." Cf. Eugenio Garin, *Intellettuali Italiani del XX Secolo* (Rome, 1974), p. 327.

12. For an excellent account of this, see Massimo L. Salvadori, *Gramsci e il Problema Storico della Democrazia* (Turin, 1970), pp. 110ff.

13. As he wrote to his sister-in-law March 19, 1927, on this point: "Naturally, I could only sketch out the major lines of this highly appealing argument, given the impossibility of obtaining the immense amount of material necessary." Cf. Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, translated by Lynne Lawner (New York, 1973), p. 79.

14. Bronislaw Baczko, "La Gauche et la Droit Hegeliennes en Pologne dans la Première Moitie du XIX Siècle," in *Annali Feltrinelli*, vol. VI (1963), pp. 137-163. Probably because of a similar political and historical situation, the Polish experience is almost parallel to the Italian one.

15. Cf. Georg Lukács, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* (Berlin, 1954).

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School and other relatively isolated groups), Hegelianism did not play a central role in German culture. In the debates concerning Nazism, Hegelianism was both violently attacked as its source and defended as its main opposition.[16] Yet, given the authoritarian character of German political life from Bismarck to Hitler, if anything, it has been the right-Hegelians' Hegel as the theoretician of the Prussian state who has had the upper hand.

In England, the situation was somewhat different. Hegelianism became popular in Britain precisely in the late nineteenth century when it was all but dead in Germany. In 1882, William James was accurately describing the predominant state of affairs when he wrote that: "We are just now witnessing a singular phenomenon in British and American philosophy. Hegelianism, so defunct in its native soil...has found among us so zealous and able a set of propagandists that today it may really be reckoned one of the most powerful influences of the time in the higher walks of thought."[17] From the time of the publication of Stirling's *The Secret of Hegel* (1865) to WW I, Hegelian philosophy dominated the British scene both, as Passmore put it, to checkmate materialism[18] as well as to provide a viable political philosophy. During this period the works of neo-Hegelians were so dominant that even Russell and Moore could not resist their influence and, consequently, began their philosophical careers as Hegelians.[19] T.H. Green first and Bernard Bosanquet later, were the leading political theoreticians up to WW I when the "Teutonic" foundations of their positions did not weather the ensuing British national chauvinism. Associated with conservatism by Hobson[20] and with German imperialist ideology by Hobhouse during the war,[21] British neo-Hegelianism did not survive the forced identification of the Hegelian and Fascist concepts of the state during the early 1920s. Thus, it was rapidly phased out to finally disappear from the English scene with the death of the two main remaining exponents, Muirhead and Collingwood, without leaving

16. For typical examples, see Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies,* vol. II: "The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx and the Aftermath" (New York, 1962: originally published in 1945); and Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (New York, 1941). Since almost every German emigré of some repute felt compelled to deal with the subject of the Nazi outcome in German culture, the literature is extensive. Fromm's *Escape from Freedom,* Horkheimer's and Adorno's *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* Cassirer's *The Myth of the State* and scores of others fall into this category.

17. William James, "On Some Hegelism," in *Mind,* April, 1882, reprinted in *The Will to Believe* (New York, 1898), pp. 263ff.

18. John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* (London, 1957), p. 51.

19. Cf. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell* (New York, 1967), p. 76. R.G. Collingwood was not exaggerating too much when he wrote that "the philosophy of Green's school might be found, from about 1880 to 1910, penetrating and fertilizing every part of national life." As quoted in Passmore, *op.cit.,* p. 57.

20. Cf. J.A. Hobson, *Democracy after the War* (London, 1919). For an excellent analysis of these criticisms, see Cristiano Camporesi, "Il Neoidealismo Inglese e la 'Teoria Metafisica dello Stato,' " unpublished manuscript.

21. Leonard T. Hobhouse, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State. A Criticism* (New York, 1918). In a particularly pathetic preface addressed to his son, a pilot in the British airforce, Hobhouse recalls how one summer morning, while reading Hegel, he was surprised by a German air raid. It was the German bombs, he claims, that proved to him once and for all the falsity and evil character of Hegel's philosophy!

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any lasting cultural imprint.

A very similar phenomenon takes place in Russia. In fact, according to Planty-Bonjour's somewhat exaggerated evaluation: "no European country has felt an Hegelian influence as durable as Russia, and no European country has been so profoundly affected by this philosophy."[22] This influence easily survived the positivist reaction which, along with most of Europe, also engulfed Russia,[23] but eventually succumbed for other reasons. Before being ruthlessly "refuted" by Stalin's well-known administrative methods, it had run into other problems: "In spite of the brilliant variations inspired by Hegelianism concerning the importance of the dialectic as the foundation of social practice, the individualist, nihilist, anarchist or, from the opposite side, collectivist tendencies so lively in Russia at that time, resulted in Hegel's political philosophy failing to favorably influence the course of the Russian state."[24]

Unlike what has been popularized by the predominant mythology of the Turner thesis, according to which the practical needs of the Western frontier conditioned all of American culture,[25] during the pioneer days of Western expansion—1850-1890—wherever there happened to be any philosophy west of the Alleghenies, it was mainly Hegelian or Platonist.[26] While buffalo were still roaming on the Great Plains, in 1859-1860, in the wilderness of Warren County, Missouri, Henry C. Brockmeyer was busily attempting to translate Hegel's *Logic* into English[27]—and for a while he even tried to teach Hegelian philosophy to the Indians around Muskogee, Oklahoma.[28] The first professional philosophy journal in the United States was published in 1867 by the St. Louis Hegelians when W.T. Harris, its future editor, could not publish a critique of Spencer's philosophy in the fashionable *North American Review*.[29] For 26 years, the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (described by Dewey as "the only philosophic journal in the country at that time [published] by the only group of laymen devoted to philosophy for non-theological

22. Guy Planty-Bonjour, *Hegel et la Pensée Philosophique en Russie 1830-1917* (The Hague, 1974), p. 323.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 332.

25. This erroneous thesis is extrapolated to philosophy by L. van Becelaere in his *La Philosophie en Amerique depuis les Origines jusqu'à Nos Jours (1607-1900)* (New York, 1904), where the low interest in Thomist philosophy is traced to the American spirit which is "primarily interested in practical matters so that speculative research is only of relative and secondary relevance." Thus, "its formula remains Franklin's: these speculations can have some truth, but they will generally remain uncertain. Consequently, they are useless and it is preferable not to deal with them" (p. 160). In the introduction to the book, Royce promptly rebuffs such an interpretation (p. xiii). Ironically, the book is dedicated to W.T. Harris, a St. Louis Hegelian whose life-work violently contradicts the book's main claims.

26. Cf. Paul R. Anderson, *Platonism in the Midwest* (New York, 1963).

27. Cf. Henry A. Pochmann, *New England Transcendentalism and St. Louis Hegelianism* (Philadelphia, 1948), p. 12.

28. William H. Goetzmann, ed., "Introduction" to *The American Hegelians: An Intellectual Episode in the History of Western America* (New York, 1973), pp. 11, 354-355. Unfortunately, Brockmeyer failed to come up, even after several revisions over a period of 40 years, with a publishable translation. For a sample of his work, see *ibid.*, pp. 355-363.

29. Anderson, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

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reasons")[30] made available in English the best contributions of American and German philosophers. Furthermore, far from being a local phenomenon, the St. Louis Hegelians established philosophical centers all over the midwest and, with the Platonists, were entrenched in such would-be metropolises that never quite made it such as Osceola, Missouri, Jacksonville, Illinois, Dubuque, Iowa, Terre Haute, Indiana, and Cincinnati, Ohio. Chronologically located between the fuzzy New England Transcendentalists[31] of the early nineteenth century and the more practically minded pragmatists of the *fin de siècle*, between 1860 and 1890, Harris, Brockmeyer and Snider in St. Louis, and Stallo, Kaufmann, Conway and Willich in Ohio[32] were generally considered leading American philosophers—which explains why James felt obliged to attack them in the previously-cited article "On Some Hegelisms." Although they practically died out by 1900 after Harris became U.S. Commissioner of Education and Brockmeyer the Missouri lieutenant governor,[33] the Hegelians had a considerable cultural impact. As Anderson put it, "the equalitarian attitude toward education and culture tended to break down not only barriers between classes but also barriers between the sexes. It was no mere accident that the feminist movement had greater strength in the Midwest than elsewhere, that Sorasis of Jacksonville and Friends in Council of Quincy were two of the earliest women's clubs in the country, that the first coeducational institution in the country was in Ohio (Oberlin), that Mississippi was the first state to grant women control over their own property, that Kansas first permitted them to vote in school elections, and that Wyoming was the first state to grant complete equality in the franchise."[34]

Contrary to the superficial standard explanations for the decline of Hegelianism in the United States and England in terms of the basically foreign nature of this theoretical framework,[35] shifting patterns of leisure,[36]

30. In Goetzmann, *op.cit.*, p. 383.

31. For a reconstruction of a couple of confrontations between the Transcendentalists Alcott and Emerson with the more philosophically sophisticated St. Louis Hegelians, see Pochmann, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-65.

32. Cf. Loyd D. Easton, *Hegel's First American Followers: The Ohio Hegelians* (Athens, Ohio, 1966).

33. Goetzmann, ed., *op.cit.*, p. 25.

34. Anderson, *op.cit.*, p. 19. For a more systematic account of the St. Louis Hegelians' views, see Frances Bolles Harmon, *The Social Philosophy of the St. Louis Hegelians* (New York, 1943).

35. According to Harmon, the St. Louis Hegelian conceived of "a national state in terms foreign to social theory in the United States at the time." Cf. *op.cit.*, p. 99. Even Bosanquet himself, during the first World War, felt compelled to denounce the foreign character of German philosophy. Cf. his *Social and International Ideals* (London, 1917), pp. 286ff.

36. According to Anderson, at the end of the 19th century, "when there was time for leisure, men wanted a less studious type than philosophical clubs could offer... The result was a tremendous increase in sports... Racing became a common spectator sport... Interest in prize-fighting increased tremendously... Baseball was well on its way...to become the chief American sport." Cf. *op.cit.*, pp. 192-193. Along with vaudeville shows, P.T. Barnum's circus and Buffalo Bill's "Wild West Show," sports allegedly spelled the end of Midwestern idealist philosophyl

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or St. Louis' loss of Midwestern cultural hegemony to Chicago,[37] the social and political reasons underlying this phenomenon are considerably more complex. On the one hand, the social individuality postulated by the Hegelian theory of the ethical state could not be brought about without qualitatively altering socio-economic relations (which explains why historically left-Hegelians in Europe tended to gravitate toward Marxism), while on the other, the turn of the century successful relaunching of capitalist accumulation through imperialist expansion led to a forced identification of the ideal with the real, and thus toward a conservative idealist apology. Both branches lost their relevance with the eschatological expectations of the radical tendencies shipwrecking on the unanticipated resilience of what was considered an extremely unstable socio-political state of affairs, and the conservative wing providing accounts of social reconciliations which were neither altogether credible nor ultimately necessary. It is not surprising that in the United States the pragmatists ended up jettisoning the speculative Hegelian framework altogether while salvaging its contents,[38] while in England the pop philosophies of Russell and Moore captured Oxford and Cambridge, with the few lingering tendencies in the London School of Economics turning to Marxism.

It was in Italy, however, that Hegelianism had its most profound and lasting socio-political impact. As Landucci put it, In Italy, "unlike in England (and France), Hegelianism has not been merely an academic movement of professors, but has been an element of the civil life of the nation at the times culminating with the Risorgimento."[39] Not only did it become identified with the philosophy of Italian unification, but it set the tone for the intellectual life of the next century. Unlike Germany, England and the United States which had the Reformation in their pasts, in Italy national unification took place against, among other things, Vatican cultural and political hegemony so that Hegelianism became a kind of lay religion. This is why, already in 1851, looking ahead to the struggles for independence and unification, Bertrando Spaventa, who was to become the leading Italian neo-Hegelian of his time, could prefigure the Gramscian theme of cultural hegemony in writing: "The cannon is not always enough. Maybe the Austrians will be armed matter, but the Pope, the cardinals, the priests, the friars, the Jesuits, the ignorants, and maybe even Ferdinand of Bourbon are half matter and half idea."[40] Unlike other countries where the Hegelian theory of the ethical state, social individuality, and education did not directly

37. Cf. William H. Werkmeister, *A History of Philosophical Ideas in America* (New York, 1949), p. 74.

38. Thus, Dewey openly acknowledged that "acquaintance with Hegel has left a permanent deposit in my thinking... [I]n the content of his ideas there is often an extraordinary depth; in many of his analyses, taken out of their mechanical dialectical setting, an extraordinary acuteness." Cf. John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," in Goetzmann, ed., *op.cit.*, p. 387.

39. Landucci, "L'Hegelismo in Italia...," *op.cit.*, p. 615.

40. Bertrando Spaventa, letter dated October 8, 1851, now reprinted in his *Opere* (Florence, 1972), vol. III, p. 636.

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clash with existing social and political realities, in Italy all of this translated immediately into an explosive political program. Gramsci's theories of civil society, of intellectual formation and of cultural hegemony are not only indirectly indebted to the Italian neo-Hegelian heritage, but make little sense when seen in any other way.

*Hegel in Italy*

Strange as it may seem, Hegelian thought came to Italy by way of France.[41] It seems strange, because Hegelianism did not have much luck in France during the nineteenth century and, although the first French translations of Hegel—such as that of the *Encyclopedia*—were published by the Neapolitan emigré Augusto Vera[42] from 1859 to 1870 (terrible translations, but not that much worse than any of the others done at that time),[43] it was not until the 1930s that Hegelian thought had a major impact on French culture through Koyré, Kojève and Hyppolite.[44] In the 1830s, however, Victor Cousin had introduced Hegel and discussed new developments in German thought in his *Fragmentes Philosophique* which, as it turned out, actually introduced Hegel to Italian intellectuals, which, at that time, were greatly under the influence of French culture.[45] Thus, it was through Cousin that Domenico Mazzoni

41. Cf. Giovanni Gentile, *Storia della Filosofia Italiana dal Genovesi al Galluppi* (Milan, 1930), vol. II, pp. 118ff.; Eugenio Garin, *La Filosofia* (Milan, 1949), vol. II, pp. 488ff.; and Giuseppe Vacca, *Politica e Filosofia in Bertrando Spaventa* (Bari, 1967), p. 50.

42. Contrary to Hyppolite's claim to the effect that only *part* of Hegel's *Encyclopedia* had been translated by Vera, all three sections appeared. In fact, Vera was well into a French translation of Hegel's lectures on *The Philosophy of Religion* when the publisher's bankruptcy forced a suspension of the whole project. Hyppolite, who traces the French Hegel revival to Lucien Herr and Jean Wahl, completely overlooks the *foreign* impact of the mid-19th century French translations of Hegel. Cf. Jean Hyppolite, "La Phénomenologie de Hegel et la Pensée Français Contemporaine," in his *Figures de la Pensée Philosophique* (Paris, 1971), vol. 1, pp. 231-233. Already in 1843 Vera had introduced his account of Hegel's philosophy in France with his "Logique de Hegel" in *Revue du Lyonnais*, vol. XVII (1843), pp. 397-404. Subsequently, Vera had his book, *An Introduction to Speculative Philosophy and Logic* (St. Louis, 1875), published by the St. Louis Hegelians after it had already been serialized in their *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.

43. In his *Hegels Naturphilosophie und die Bearbeitung derselben durch den italienischen Philosophen A. Vera* (Berlin, 1868), Rosenkranz called Vera "the most rigorous systematizer Hegel has ever had, who follows him step by step with full devotion" (p. 5) and claimed that "from now on, those who have trouble understanding Hegel in German would be advised to read Vera's translations" (p. 9). Vera's translations, however, rank among some of the worst ever published. For devastating critiques, see Croce, "Prefazione" to the Italian translation of Hegel's *Encyclopedia,* reprinted in his *Aneddoti di Varia Letteratura* (Bari, 1954), pp. 261-265, and best of all, Guido Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani di Napoli: Augusto Vera e la Corrente Ortodossa* (Milan, 1964), pp. 147-163, and pp. 276-284.

44. Cf. Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 3ff.

45. Galluppi, a Neapolitan philosopher who already in 1831 had translated Cousin's book into Italian, wrote him in 1838 that almost all recent French philosophical works were readily available in Naples, while Spaventa in 1851 laments that none of the recent German works by Kant, Hegel and Schelling are to be found even in the best libraries in Florence or Turin. For a discussion of this, see Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani di Napoli, op.cit.*, p. 25; and Guido Oldrini, *Il Primo Hegelismo Italiano* (Florence, 1969), p. 323. Cf. also De Meis' letters of November 12 and December 25, 1851, to Bertrando Spaventa, where the former jubilantly reports from Paris to have finally located Hegel's works of that time that were unavailable in Turin. Reprinted in

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learned about Hegel and, toward the end of 1835, went to Berlin to learn first-hand of the new developments.[46] This is how he became an Hegelian and prepared (but never published) an edited translation of Hegel's smaller *Logic*.

Much more typical of the first Italian Hegelians is Gianbattista Passerini (1793-1864), who was a member of a Northern Italian sect seeking national unity and independence. Chased into exile by the police for "studying the well-known French philosophers, and thus aware of and imbued with their dangerous theories often claiming that man should be free,"[47] he went to Berlin in 1824 where he personally met Hegel and, in 1840, translated into Italian his *Philosophy of History*, published in Switzerland the next year. A similar inspiration produced the first Italian translation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in 1848 and attempts by De Sanctis and Spaventa to translate into Italian Hegel's larger *Logic* and parts of *The Phenomenology*—attempts carried out while the former was polishing off his political and philosophical education in a Bourbon jail, where he was serving time for "subversive activities,"[48] and while the latter was escaping northward in an attempt to avoid a similar fate.[49]

Clearly, as Oldrini put it: "The struggle for the triumph of Hegelianism and of classical German philosophy retains throughout the period [1840-1850] a sharp tendency to become identified with the struggle for the universal and generalized application of liberal bourgeois principles against the old particularism of the privileges and of the 'estates'."[50] This identification was further facilitated by the fact that conservative forces opposing

Vacca, ed., Bertrando Spaventa, *Unificazione Nazionale ed Egemonia Culturale* (Bari, 1969), pp. 306, 316.

46. For biographical references on Mazzoni (1783-1853), see Guido Oldrini, ed., *Il Primo Hegelismo Italiano, op.cit.*, pp. 93-95.

47. From a note in the police files, quoted by Oldrini, *ibid.*, p. 110.

48. Having become acquainted with those parts of Hegel's *Aesthetics* available in the first two volumes of *Cours d'Esthetique Analyse et Traduit en Partie par Charles Benard* (published in 1840 and 1843—the remaining three volumes did not appear until 1848-50), Francesco De Sanctis became an Hegelian during the middle 1840s while studying with other Neapolitan Hegelians. Arrested in December, 1850, for political activities, he spent most of the next three years in jails where he struggled with Hegel's *Logic*. Cf. Guido Oldrini, *La Cultura Filosofica Napoletana dell'Ottocento* (Bari, 1973), pp. 353-368. This does not mean that the Neapolitan Hegelians did not have a lot of problems with Hegel. In a letter to his brother Bertrando, where he promises to study philosophy again, Silvio Spaventa wrote: "Here, of philosophy books I first read Spinoza; I studied day and night. What did you expect? I had trouble understanding. I could not retain anything. Then I read Hegel's *Phenomenology* three times (would you believe it?). I desperately cried over it: I did not understand it; I did not get anything out of it; I could not retain anything..." Letter dated May 4, 1853, in Silvio Spaventa, *Dal 1848 al 1881. Lettere, Scritti, Documenti*, edited by Benedetto Croce (Bari, 1923), p. 182.

49. Having hastily departed from Naples October 26, 1849, after his brother Silvio was already in jail for political activities, Bertrando Spaventa published in 1851 in Turin his *Studii sopra la Filosofia di Hegel*, which is part commentary and part paraphrase of the "Preface" to Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Excerpts from Spaventa's *Studii* are now reprinted in Oldrini, ed., *Il Primo Hegelismo Italiano, op.cit.*, pp. 309-345. On the circumstances leading to Spaventa's exile, see Giovanni Gentile, "Bertrando Spaventa," now in Bertrando Spaventa, *Opere*, edited by Gentile (Florence, 1962), vol. I, pp. 22-25.

50. Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani di Napoli, op.cit.*, p. 34.

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Italian unification also perceived Hegelian thought in this fashion. Italian Catholics in particular, with an eye on recent French and German events, readily accepted Heine's identification of the French Revolution and German thought and saw Hegel as the precursor of atheism and socialism. According to them, "communism and socialism emerged armed from Hegel's brain in the same way as Athena did from Zeus's head."[51] This also helps to explain why Hegelianism did not have much success in France during the same period. There the bourgeois revolution had long since been consummated and Hegel was not seen as the future, but as part of the past to be, at best, included as a moment within the predominant eclecticism. While in France socialism and communism were increasingly challenging the inadequacies of the already aging bourgeois regime, in Naples the French Revolution remained either a hope or a threat. Thus, unlike French students of Hegel such as Cousin who never became Hegelians, the Italian Hegelians—especially the Neapolitans—immediately incorporated Hegel and translated his thoughts into their social and political projects of cultural and national rejuvenation. In the words of Bertrando Spaventa, who became the most articulate member of the group: "beginning in 1843 in Naples the Hegelian idea penetrated the minds of young cultivators of science who, as if moved by a holy love, preached it in their words and writings. Neither the suspicions already aroused in the police—instigated by religious ignorance and hypocrisy—nor threats and persecutions were able to weaken the faith of those courageous defenders of the independence of thought . . . It was an irresistible and universal need that drove them towards an unknown and splendid future . . . The movement had already begun, and if it had not been prevented by the arrogance of material force, today we would have already seen its fruits."[52]

*Spaventa's Hegelianism*

At the time when Spaventa was exiled to Turin (1851), most of Northern Italy was still under Austrian control. Thus, Spaventa was confronted with the unenviable task of proposing to the subjugated as a doctrine of liberation the subjugators' own philosophy. Aware of this paradoxical state of affairs,

51. Quoted in Bertrando Spaventa's letter to *Il Progresso,* August 28, 1851, reprinted in Giuseppe Vacca, ed., Bertrando Spaventa, *Unificazione Nazionale . . ., op.cit.,* p. 83. As Landucci put it: "It is understandable how that ideological prestige that made Hegelianism a national event by transforming it into a banner, was the work not only of those who claimed to be Hegelians, but also of its adversaries. If in Italy there were two decades of fear of Hegel, if 1861 would produce a shock in seeing Hegelianism publically professed from university classrooms (with the civic importance that was then accorded to universities—precisely because in the past they had been the guardians of 'traditions'), this resulted from the fact that [in Italy] Hegelianism had been seen through the filters of German and French atheism and socialism considered as its consequences." Landucci, "L'Hegelismo in Italia," *op.cit.,* p. 625.

52. Bertrando Spaventa, *Studii sopra la Filosofia di Hegel, op.cit.,* pp. 322-323 (originally published in 1851). In 1867 Spaventa reiterated the same account: "Hegel and the other German philosophers were perhaps better known in Naples before 1848 than they are today. In addition to Galluppi, their works had also been studied, interpreted and discussed by Colecchi, and following him by Cusani, Ajello, Gatti, and my friends Tari and Calvello. Some of these men even took these philosophers for companions and for consolation in the Bourbon jails and dungeons." Cf. Spaventa, *Opere,* vol. III, p. 19.

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Spaventa even avoided calling Hegel's philosophy "German" by substituting a less popular synonym.[53] Furthermore, in a political context electrified by impatient nationalist aspirations, in proposing Hegelianism as the philosophy of Italian unification and cultural rebirth, Spaventa was confronted with a chauvinist philosophical tradition dating back to Vico's *De Antiquisima Italorum Sapientia* of 1710.[54] There Vico had located Etruria as the land of Pythagorean thought and, in the context of tracing the sources of the Italian language, he had hinted at the existence of an original innate Italian philosophy dating back to pre-history. This thesis, of course, was quickly abandoned by Vico,[55] but it was nonetheless subsequently recycled by Gioberti and a wave of lesser known nationalists to support preposterous claims of innate Italian philosophical and cultural superiority. With the help of Mommsen's then recent historical research, Spaventa rejected this chauvinist account and reiterated Vico's own subsequent rejection of it.[56] By elaborating his own younger brother's (Silvio's) rejection of these nationalist claims,[57] Spaventa directly attacked "the prejudice that [Italian] and European thought are in opposition to each other"[58] and, following Gatti,[59] developed his famous thesis concerning "the circulation of Italian thought" as a critique of the Church's regressive role in Italian culture.

53. As he himself reminisced in 1867: "I did not dare use the word *tedesca* [German] at a time when that term was generally applied to the Austrians [*tedeschi*], who held sway not only over Lombardy and Venetia, but in Tuscany as well." Cf. Bertrando Spaventa, *Logica e Metafisica,* reprinted in Giovanni Gentile, ed., *Opere,* vol. III, p. 20n.

54. For an excellent reconstruction and discussion of this tradition, see Marcel Grilli, "The Nationality of Philosophy and Bertrando Spaventa," in *Journal of the History of Ideas,* II:3 (June, 1941), pp. 346-371. Cf. especially p. 364 where he lists a significant number of long-since forgotten exemplars of this tradition.

55. Cf. Benedetto Croce, *Storia della Storiografia Italiana,* vol. I (Bari, 1947), p. 53, and his *La Filosofia di Gianbattista Vico* (Bari, 1965), pp. 146-153.

56. Bertrando Spaventa, *La Filosofia Italiana dal Secolo XVI al Nostro Tempo,* second lecture, now in *Opere,* vol. II, pp. 466-479.

57. Cf. Silvio Spaventa, *Dal 1848 al 1861, op.cit.,* pp. 8ff. Silvio Spaventa joined his brother Bertrando in Naples in the early 1840s. Unlike Bertrando, who joined the priesthood for purely economic reasons (under the exhortation of his uncle Don Onorato Croce) and remained throughout his life the more philosophical of the two, Silvio was always the one more politically involved. As Gentile put it, "it could be said that Bertrando had split functions with Silvio: always in agreement over everything, one attended to speculation and the other to practice." Cf. Gentile, "Bertrando Spaventa," *op.cit.,* p. 21. As Gentile wrote elsewhere, during the 1840s "Bertrando worked while Silvio conspired," in *ibid.,* p. 11. In 1844, Silvio started a journal, *Il Nazionale,* which prefigured so many of the themes elaborated later by Bertrando in Turin after 1851 that Vacca has been more than justified in suggesting that Bertrando himself had a much more active but anonymous collaboration than mere sympathetic approval of that effort. What tends to reinforce this hypothesis is the fact that the prolific Bertrando was practically prevented from actively participating in these debates by his religious affiliation up to 1850 (when he finally left the priesthood) and, during this period, seems not to have written anything under his own name. Cf. Vacca, *Politica e Filosofia, op.cit.,* pp. 9-84.

59. In his work on *Della Filosofia Italiana* of 1846, Gatti had also confronted the problems of the history of Italian philosophy but, unlike earlier chauvinist accounts, he had attributed the decline during the last two centuries specifically to the Church's repressive policies. Himself one of the leading Neapolitan Hegelians, Gatti also saw German philosophy as the wave of the future. For an excellent discussion of Gatti, see Grilli, *op.cit.,* pp. 356ff. On the liberal and democratic sources of Spaventa's thesis of the circulation of Italian thought, see Vacca, *Politica e Filosofia, op.cit.,* pp. 81ff.

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Unlike earlier analyses of the involution of post-Renaissance Italian philosophy (such as Mamiani's and Gioberti's) which ultimately provided no satisfactory socio-historical explanation,[60] Gatti's and Silvio Spaventa's identification of the Church as the culprit of Italian cultural decline fed right into a liberal-democratic political platform of Italian unification *against* the Vatican and under Piedmontese political hegemony. Notwithstanding its bold socio-political implications, Spaventa's project of national reconstruction and cultural de-provincialization did not fall on sympathetic ears in Turin—which at that time was still dominated by the Catholic philosophies of Gioberti and Rosmini. Spaventa several years later was to describe this cold reception as follows: "Needless to say, in Turin, I was a complete fiasco... Yet I did not despair. After some months I read a paper in a public meeting concerning Giordano Bruno's practical philosophy. It was the evening of St. John the Baptist when all the good people of Turin would make a huge bonfire in the town square. The reception that met me was so honest and friendly that some priest in other times would not have hesitated to throw me into the flames with all his heart."[61] Unintimidated, Spaventa spent the next decade painstakingly elaborating Hegelianism as the philosophy of the Italian Risorgimento by reconstructing the unbroken philosophical thread from Bruno and Campanella to Descartes and Spinoza, and from Vico to Hegel.[62] Accordingly, the universal spirit of Italian philosophy was seen as brutally repressed by the Church in the sixteenth century so that further developments could only occur elsewhere—in Germany and Northern Europe. National liberation and cultural rebirth, therefore, could only take place by going back to that tradition—not to the precise point where it had been violently interrupted, of course, but to the point at which it had reached its highest level of articulation abroad. It was a matter of *"undoing the work of three centuries,* during which the attempts were made to destroy even the last vestiges of Italian ingenuity, to develop the germs of a new civilization which in those times were suffocated, and accept as our heritage those which have

60. This does not mean that there were not a variety of absurd explanations. Thus, Luigi Palmieri saw the decline as a result of the importation of foreign ideas into Italian soil. Since he recognized "the need for the commerce of ideas as well as for the traffic of commodities," he did not absolutely condemn the study of German philosophy: he simply sought an import quota. Palmieri, incidentally, was responsible for having the police close the Spaventas' school of Hegelian philosophy in Naples in 1847. Cf. Gentile, "Bertrando Spaventa," *op.cit.*, p. 19, and Vacca, *Politica e Filosofia, op.cit.*, p. 83.

61. Spaventa, *Opere,* vol. III, p. 23.

62. The most systematic account of this reconstruction was presented in 1861 in the University of Naples, in the wake of the liberation of Naples by Garibaldi's troops, in a series of lectures subsequently published by Gentile under the title *Italian Philosophy in its Relations with European Philosophy*, in 1908. They are now reprinted in *Opere*, vol. II, pp. 405-678. Ironically, Spaventa succeeded Palmieri—who had earlier in 1847 sought to refute Hegelianism with the help of the police—at the University of Naples. Apparently Palmieri never lost his knack for administrative measures. As Bertrando wrote to Silvio November 27, 1861: "Palmieri intends to have the students petition the Ministry to throw out of the University of Naples a professor who does not profess an *Italian philosophy*. In 1847 he forced me to close my school with a recourse to Monsignor Mazzetti. Today he still thinks that we are in 1847." Cf. Spaventa, *Opere*, vol. II, p. 687.

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been fruitful in freer lands and which today form the substance and principle of intellectual, political and religious life of other nations."[63]

This nationalist emphasis, which later facilitated a forced fascist appropriation of the Spaventan heritage largely through Gentile's efforts,[64] had both a theoretical foundation as well as a clearly tactical value. Understanding philosophy as the acme of cultural achievement, Spaventa defended its national character in terms of concrete universality (i.e., the specific embodiment that the universality of modern philosophy receives in particular socio-historical settings). Challenged both by chauvinists such as Palmieri who outrightly rejected any "foreign" philosophies which were not intrinsically Italian, and by orthodox Hegelians such as Vera whose abstract cosmopolitanism failed to recognize any cultural particularities in philosophical traditions, Spaventa defended nationalism in philosophy as the socio-historical specificity of any concrete expression of modern thought. As he put it, "in order to see what the nationality of our philosophy may be, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the nationality of philosophical life in general. And to this end it is not sufficient to say that philosophy is the last and clearest expression of a people's life... On the other hand, I am fully familiar with what some claim: 'What do we care about Italian or non-Italian philosophy? We want truth, and truth has nothing to do with nationality.' Of course, truth transcends nationality, but without nationality truth is an abstraction. Transplant truth as much as you want: if it has no correspondence with our national character it will remain a truth in itself, but not for us; for us it will always be a dead thing. To show that we have always lived in the heart of European thought and we have always promoted and participated in this thought, and that we have not been alone and outside of common life, is not a revelation or a diplomatic gesture, or even mere human respect, but a noble and rigorous duty for those professing philosophy."[65] But this peculiar mode of Italianization of Hegelian thought had not escaped the attention of even sympathetic critics. As one of them wrote in 1868: "To courage and firm conviction [Spaventa] has added a certain shrewdness truly unusual in philosophers... It was not unknown to him how touchy our disposition was in its commitment to old traditions. A politician as well as a philosopher, he did not come out and say: *Here is a philosophy fallen from the sky, a foreign but true philosophy; accept it.* Instead, he had the sagacity to say: Here is a wholly home-made philosophy, entirely the product of our bowels, which foreigners have stolen from us and developed. Let us steal it

63. Spaventa, *Opere*, vol. III, p. 25.

64. This unwarranted appropriation was uncritically legitimated by the "liberals" of Crocean extraction. As Vacca put it: "The liberal reaction to the Gentilean attempt of passing the 'ethical state' of the Spaventa brothers both as the high point of the Risorgimento's political ideology as well as the vehicle of unification of all the Risorgimento's political thought (from Cavour to Mazzini) in the direction of a linear development toward the Fascist State, was to abandon Bertrando Spaventa to the fascists while defending the liberal orthodoxy of Silvio Spaventa and De Sanctis." Cf. Giuseppe Vacca, "Recenti Studi sull'Hegelismo Napoletano," in *Studi Storici*, vol. VII (1966), p. 174.

65. As quoted in Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani di Napoli, op.cit.*, p. 171.

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back and make it ours once again, since it is properly ours..."[66] In fully carrying out this process of philosophical nationalization, however, Spaventa prefigured what half a century later were to become vital Gramscian themes such as a pedagogical theory of the state, the Hegelian foundations of Marxism, cultural hegemony, the primacy of the intellectuals, a theory of social individuality, and a socio-historically grounded program of national emancipation.

Yet, Spaventa's project of Hegelianization of Italian culture had only a very limited *immediate* success. As already indicated, from 1850 to 1860 in Turin his work did not find widespread acceptance. According to Vacca, "if in Naples the Hegelians had from the very beginning aroused the suspicions of the Bourbon police and had been thereby persecuted, it was not the case that in Piedmont the road was clear. It was not the police but the closed, biased Piedmontese society and culture that put up a fierce resistance to the penetration of his ideas; thus, he remained an irregular and a rebel throughout his exile."[67] Even his debut at the University of Naples in 1861 was not altogether triumphant. As he himself described the reception: "...not all those who came came with love and good will. I realized that from the very beginning. I know that the Giobertans—I don't know what to call them: fossils, cetaceans, antedeluvians, asphyxiated—have it in for me. They will suffocate me if they could."[68] Sure enough, in February and March of the following year, there were Catholic-inspired counter-revolutionary riots which had to be put down by the National Guard.[69] Although he had begun to gain some international recognition,[70] Spaventa did not succeed in massively penetrating Italian culture. This was also connected with the fact that Spaventa's own abrasive personality was not conducive to building a sizeable following[71] and that during his own lifetime he did not succeed in

66. Pietro Siciliani, "Gli Hegeliani d'Italia," in *Rivista Bolognese,* 1868, p. 520; as quoted by Vacca, *Politica e Filosofia, op.cit.,* p. 211. This was more or less consciously the case. Thus, in a letter from Silvio we read: "I believe that you have understood a crucial truth: that Italians will never understand what is modern philosophy unless they derive it from their own philosophers; and there is good reason for this, since they should not be blamed if they do not understand anything of a philosophy that they see falling on their heads as if it came from the sky. And this is what truly German philosophy is for them. Thus, your work...could be the communication link between the ordinary philosophy in Italy and that which we would like to be there." Cf. *Silvio Spaventa, op.cit.,* p. 313.

67. Vacca, *Politca e Filosofia, op.cit.,* p. 172.

68. Cf. Bertrando Spaventa's letter to Silvio, dated December 8, 1861, reprinted in *Opere,* vol. II, p. 691.

69. Cf. Bertrando's letters to Silvio of February 10, 21, 22, and March 22, 1862, in *Opere,* vol. II, pp. 700-714. For an account of these same riots, see Marc Monnier, "Le Mouvement Italien à Naples de 1830 à 1865," *Revue de Deux Mondes,* April 15, 1865, p. 1038.

70. In a series of "Briefe über italienische Philosophie" published in Berlin in *Die Gedanke* between 1864 and 1865, Theodor Straeter wrote that only in Naples could modern philosophy find new life. He considered Spaventa's theory of the circulation of Italian thought the most effective instrument for eliminating from Italian consciousness the residue of Medieval Catholicism and for constructing a modern state. Straeter even compared Spaventa to Kuno Fischer.

71. Along these lines, Russo writes: "Severe in his judgments, rigorous in his logic, sarcastic and irritable with his friends, Spaventa tended to create around himself an atmosphere of solitude and coolness, which was one of the very reasons for his greatness." Cf. Luigi Russo, *Franceso De Sanctis e la Cultura Napoletana* (Florence, 1959), p. 122.

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finding a suitable publisher for his works. Thus, he ended up leaving many works unfinished and others completely unknown until Gentile began publishing them and popularizing some of his ideas toward the end of the century.[72] With the implementation of a policy of rapid industrialization after unification, the expansion in Northern Italy was carried out with the help of Neapolitan capital[73] at the expense of the deteriorating Southern agrarian economy. This resulted in a political crisis during which the Neapolitan Hegelians tended increasingly toward conservative positions and historical irrelevance in the age of "transformism" whose socio-political involution was reflected in the growing popularity of positivist views.[74]

After Spaventa's death in 1883, this rising positivism and the decline of the "historical Right" with which Spaventa had been politically associated, combined in almost completely erasing his memory from Italian culture so that by 1897, Labriola could rightly say of the whole Neapolitan Hegelian movement that: "Now every trace, and even the memory of this movement has passed away among us after the lapse of but a few years. The writings of those thinkers are not found anywhere but in the shops of antiquarians and second-hand book dealers. This dissolution into nothing of an entire scientific school of no mean account is not due solely to the often unkind and little praiseworthy vicissitudes of university life, nor to the epidemic spread of positivism which gathers here and there the fruits of a rather *demi-monde* science, but to deeper causes. Those Hegelians wrote, taught, and argued among themselves as though they were living in Utopia instead of Naples. They held mental discussions with their *German comrades*. They replied from their pulpits or in their writings only to such criticisms as were made by themselves, so that they carried on a dialogue which appeared as a monologue to their audience and readers. They did not succeed in molding their treatises and dialectics into books which looked like new intellectual conquests of the nation."[75] But precisely at the time that Labriola was writing this type of theoretical obituary, Croce was already preparing for publication some of Silvio Spaventa's papers, while Gentile, who had independently reached similar conclusions and who had written almost an identical evaluation of Spaventa,[76] was becoming interested in gradually publishing all those

72. Cf. Gentile, "Bertrando Spaventa," in Spaventa, *Opere*, vol. I, p. 5. Cf. also Benedetto Croce, "La Vita Letteraria a Napoli dal 1860 al 1900," in his *La Letteratura delle Nuova Italia* (Bari, 1954), vol. IV, pp. 267-355.

73. For a systematic account of the genesis of Southern Italian underdevelopment—and consequent socio-political decay—see Edmondo M. Capecelatro and Antonio Carlo, *Contro la "Questione Meriodionale"* (Rome, 1973). For an accurate summary of the economic achievement of the Italian state during this period, see Gaetano Salvemini, *The Origins of Fascism in Italy*, trans. Robert Vivarelly (New York, 1973), chapter 1, pp. 1-18.

74. For an exhaustive analysis of the philosophical decline of the Neapolitan Hegelians during this period, see Guido Oldrini, *La Cultura Filosofica Napoletana dell'Ottocento, op.cit.*, pp. 517ff.

75. Labriola, letter to Sorel dated May 14, 1897, now in *Socialism and Philosophy, op.cit.*, pp. 54-55.

76. Thus, in a letter dated September 16, 1897 to his former teacher Donato Jaja, Gentile states: "Think that Bertrando Spaventa has just about in vain lectured to several generations of

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writings which later became Spaventa's *Collected Works* (*Opere*). What Labriola bemoaned as incomprehensible jargon was about to become standard Italian philosophical discourse for the next half century.

This explains how it happened that, instead of becoming acknowledged as the inextricable heritage of Gramscian Marxism, Spaventa's thought found resonance in Gramsci only indirectly through Croce's mediation. As Garin put it, "De Sanctis and Spaventa were important factors in the formation of Croce and Gentile: they became among the most significant components of Italian consciousness in the twentieth century through the diffusion and the rethinking that they underwent with Croce and Gentile." Yet, "it would be a serious error of perspective to attribute to Spaventa and De Sanctis that weight that they assumed only after Croce and Gentile emphasized their relevance and forced Italians to absorb them. In other words, the resonance that they had in the twentieth century should not be confused with their actual echo in their own age; thus, to be precise, . . . they belong in the history of the twentieth century."[77] Given this idealist appropriation of the Neapolitan neo-Hegelian heritage, it is not surprising that only recently, triggered by the publication of some previously forgotten works of Spaventa,[78] has there been an "attempt, on the part of Marxist historicism of a Gramscian inspiration, to change the direction [of the neo-idealist interpretation] and turn against it the experience of the first Hegelianism."[79] Yet, since the full Hegelian character of Gramsci's Marxism has been blurred by the traditional contraposition of the Italian Communist Party's brand of Marxism-Leninism (claiming Gramsci as its main "Italianizer")[80] and both the liberal version of Croce's Hegelianism as well as the fascist interpretation of Gentile's Hegelianism, not only has the extent of the theoretical continuity between Spaventa and Gramsci been underemphasized, but Gramsci's own work has not been properly understood.

The trajectory of Spaventa's thought, in fact, shows striking parallels with that of Gramsci's thought. While Gramsci went through his revolutionary apprenticeship in Turin as a journalist (1917-1919), Spaventa did his in Naples as a priest (1842-1850); both completed their initiations with failed revolutionary events after major socio-political crises (1848 and 1919); and both spent many subsequent years explaining the failure of their respective insurrectionary efforts while developing strikingly similar theoretical elaborations of contextually grounded revolutionary strategies—and both

youth and to the best of them. How many today uphold his thought? Almost all of them, at that time enlightened by that profound light that emanated from his words in his lectures and in his books, were not affected. The substance of his teaching did not come down to them . . . and they went back to Kant or even to pre-Kantianism." Cf. *Carteggio Gentile-Jaja*, vol. I (Florence, 1969), pp. 24-25.

77. Eugenio Garin, *Cronache di Filosofia Italiana (1900-1943)*, vol. I (Bari, 1966), p. 18.

78. Cf. Italo Cubeddu, "Bertrando Spaventa Publicista (Giugno-Dicembre 1851)," and Bertrando Spaventa, "Rivoluzione e Utopia," in *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana*, vol. XLII (1963), pp. 46-93.

79. Vacca, "Premessa" to Spaventa, *Unificazione Nazionale*, *op.cit.*, p. i.

80. For an account of this, see Paul Piccone, "Gramsci's Marxism: Beyond Lenin and Togliatti," *Theory and Society*, III:4 (1976).

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had to wait for a couple of decades after their deaths before their writings began to be fully appreciated. Of course, the three-quarters of a century separating the two make a great deal of difference in their respective outlooks. But to the extent that they were both vitally concerned with the Italian revolution understood as the coming into being of a new humanity along the lines traced out by the Hegelian model, they sought to develop theoretical frameworks not only amazingly similar, but also presently relevant. Although Gramsci's sparse references to Spaventa in the *Prison Notebooks* indicate that he had not read too much of Spaventa's work,[81] it is clear that he never considered any reinterpretation of it above and beyond those current in his day.[82]

Contrary to traditional Crocean interpretations of the pre-1848 Neapolitan scene simply as a liberal and progressive phase in the process of Italian unification, and the similarly traditional Gentilean accounts of a Spaventa in whom philosophy and politics are radically separated,[83] recent Gramscian reinterpretations provide a qualitatively different picture. Not only was Spaventa familiar with Ludwig von Stein's *Der Sozialismus und Kommunismus der heutigen Frankreich*, but he even sought a publisher for an Italian translation of this work that he wanted to prepare.[84] In fact, if

81. Gerratana lists four of Spaventa's works republished by Gentile as having been known by Gramsci, but all of them through secondary sources. Cf. Gramsci, *Quaderni del Carcere, op.cit.*, vol. IV, p. 3076.

82. As Giuseppe Berti has shown in his "B. Spaventa, A. Labriola e L'Hegelismo Napoletano," in *Società*, X:4 (1954), even Croce's own interpretation of his uncles' work was superficial and beset by contradictions. Thus, in *La Letteratura della Nuova Italia, op.cit.*, vol. I, p. 387, he wrote that Spaventa "had an insatiable thirst for truth and, although an Hegelian by conviction, he did not reduce the master's philosophy to a catechism to be repeated and defended for sectarian reasons, but sought to absorb it and transform it into his very own blood. He exposed it to the fire of all objections and criticisms, always ready to try to understand the adversary whoever he might be, always concerned with those aspects of truth that could remain hidden to him." Yet only a short year later he could downgrade Spaventa to the level of a mere epigone who "attempted to think, and he could not, so he merely repeated." Cf. Benedetto Croce, "Contributo alla Critica de me Stesso," now reprinted in his *Etica e Politica* (Bari, 1967), p. 346. On the whole, Croce presented a Spaventa with positivist tendencies and lingering theological concerns. But as Serra has indicated, Croce was more interested in dissociating himself from his uncle than in providing a balanced assessment. Thus in the very same "Contributo...," p. 342, Croce writes: "Spaventa came from the Church and from theology; and his main and almost sole problem was that of the relation between Being and Knowing, the problem of transcendence and immanence—the most specifically theological-philosophical problem. As for myself, having overcome the sentimental anguish associated with breaking off from religion, I soon settled with a kind of immanentism not concerned with any other world than the one in which I actually live, and not feeling primarily and directly the problem of transcendence. Thus, I never had any problem in conceiving of the relation between being and thought since, on the contrary, the problem would have been to conceive of a being separate from thought or a thought separate from being."

83. For a systematic critique of traditional Spaventa interpretations, see Vacca, *Politica e Filosofia..., op.cit.*, pp. 63-84. The main points of the Gentilean interpretation of Spaventa, according to Vacca, focus on the "very successful schema of the historiography of Italian and European philosophy, the exponent of Hegel in Italy, the lively and polemical adversary of positivistic fashions that will invest Italian academic culture around 1870." Cf. Vacca, *op.cit.*, p. 119. All of this, however, took place *after* the militant experiences of the 1848-1851 period, completely overlooked by both Gentile and Croce.

84. For a discussion of Spaventa's relation to Stein, see Sergio Landucci, "Il Giovane

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Löwith is correct in seeing Stein as half-way between Hegel and Marx,[85] it would be even more correct to see him as half-way between Hegel and Spaventa. Unlike the Stein depicted by Marcuse on the basis of later works where Stein's sociology translated Hegel's categories into reified sociological concepts which eternalized conflicts typical of bourgeois society,[86] the Stein known to Spaventa was primarily the historian of the French Revolution engaged in politically operationalizing Hegelianism. Thus, caught in the general enthusiasm associated with the French events prior to Louis Bonaparte's *coup d'etat* of December 2, 1851, he characterized these events as the second phase of the French Revolution. Accordingly, the first phase of 1789 attained *political* emancipation, while the second one sought *social* emancipation: "There are already signs of a new social transformation: the ancient world has collapsed and the new one has begun to rise. The 1789 revolution destroyed the orders, the classes, the corporations, and proclaimed the principle of equality. The new revolution will destroy all social inequalities; there will no longer be noblemen, plebeians, bourgeois nor proletarians; there will be only men."[87] He even went as far as to locate the proletariat as the new revolutionary class: "As long as a man will remain a simple *proletarian* without the means of production, he will not be truly free and equal to the owner in exercising his political rights. Thus, the law itself which declares absolute political equality while not guaranteeing the conditions necessary to bring it about, contains a great contradiction which sooner or later results in a revolutionary movement. This contradiction is the real cause of the social struggle troubling France and is now beginning to manifest itself also within other nations in Europe."[88]

As Vacca has convincingly shown, it is precisely the impact of this political experience previously ignored by neo-idealist interpretations which irrevocably casts Spaventa's thought and provides the key to all his later work. In fact, it is during this period that Spaventa developed his theory of cultural hegemony as a consequence of the leading revolutionary role that he assigned to intellectuals (philosophers) in the creation of a new ethical state

Spaventa tra Hegelismo e Socialismo," in *Annali Feltrinelli*, vol. VI (Milan, 1964), pp. 647-707. Landucci quotes in full an announcement placed by Spaventa in a Florence journal, *Il Nazionale*, September 14, 1850, where he briefly summarizes Stein's book.

85. Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, trans. David E. Green (New York, 1967), p. 241.

86. As Marcuse himself indicates, it is only in the third edition of Stein's book, published in 1850 (Spaventa knew only the shorter second edition of 1848), that "Stein's sociology. . . set out to uphold social harmony in the face of economic contradictions, and morality in the face of social struggle." Cf. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution, op.cit.*, pp. 374-388.

87. Bertrando Spaventa, "I Filosofi," in *Il Progresso*, June 8, 1851, reprinted in "Rivoluzione e Utopia," *op.cit.*, p. 70. Further on (p. 86), the same theme is articulated once again: "Having abolished in 1947 the political importance of *ownership*, with the people having attained universal suffrage, what remains is its *social* importance. The latter, in turn, by penetrating in the political sphere, deprives suffrage itself of any truth and reality so that. . . for man to be truly free, it is necessary to guarantee him all the conditions which promote the unfolding of liberty and without which, although the law recognizes and declares him equal to another man, in fact he depends on that man, not because of accidental or particular causes, but because of the existence of an order of things that the law sanctions and justifies."

88. In *Il Progresso*, October 7, 1851, reprinted in "Rivoluzione e Utopia," *op.cit.*, p. 86.

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constitutive of a new humanity through the systematic working out of its pedagogical functions. Paralleling Marx's and Engels' criticism of utopian socialism (which he did not know) along the lines of Stein's sociological operationalizing of Hegelian categories, Spaventa criticized utopias for their failure to develop the mediations necessary to guarantee their realization.[89] Yet, even assuming "the falsity of the systems, the need that generated them exists and manifests itself in many ways; it is a growing illness which corrodes all social orders and, if the reforms themselves may be utopian, the idea of reform is itself certainly not a utopia."[90] It is this state of affairs that determines the intellectuals' revolutionary role: "The philosophers are the precursors of revolution... When the social and political conditions of the life of a people do not correspond to the new principle that has developed in the world of intelligence, when the fact is in contradiction with the idea, revolution already exists as a germ in national consciousness. But then in the people the revolutionary idea is a vague, obscure and indeterminate feeling. Philosophers transform this feeling into a determinate thought; this thought is like a mirror in which the people recognize themselves, their new instincts, their new needs; in which they find resolute the contradiction between what is and what should be. Without philosophers the revolution would be blind, indeterminate, and aimless; it would be the fury of instinct instead of the infinite power of reason; the violent power of the multitude in place of the absolute right of humanity."[91]

Polemicizing with both liberals and clerics concerning the theory of the bourgeois state, Spaventa developed Hegel's critique in *The Philosophy of Right*[92] of social contract accounts as hypostatizing "a higher principle which would be the essence and the content of human will and without which the latter is nothing other than pure arbitrariness and accident."[93] To the extent that he also followed Hegel in seeing this social contract foundation as necessarily resulting in Jacobin terror (because it is based on *abstract* individualism) he went on to prefigure his later theory of the ethical state. Against the liberals, he vindicated the active interventionist function of the

89. Since he saw systems of social philosophy rooted in "universally felt needs...for a general and indeterminate happiness" which is "always the same at all times and which does not differ in quality but, rather, in the liveliness of its articulation according to the diversity of individuals, epochs, and events" [in "Rivoluzione e Utopia," *op.cit.*, p. 80], the function of intellectuals and social philosophers is to elaborate these needs into concrete projects of social reconstruction. Thus, Spaventa associated utopias with "the indiscriminate use of thought which renounces its own critical function because of either its profound distress with present unhappiness or of its satisfaction with the given reality and precipitates in the vortex of abstractions transcending the real, which is thereby restored as such, no longer challenged by the need of legitimation and explanation through reason." Cf. Vacca, *Politica e Filosofia, op.cit.*, p. 100.

90. Spaventa, "Rivoluzione e Utopia," *op.cit.*, pp. 77-78.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

92. According to Hegel, the French Revolution sought to provide a purely rational basis for the state. But since "it was only abstractions that were being used...the experiment ended in the maximum of fearfulness and terror." Cf. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford, 1942), p. 157.

93. Spaventa, "Sopra alcuni Giudizi di Niccolo Tommasso," originally published in 1855, now in *Opere*, vol. II, p. 205.

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state in educating the masses, while against the clerics he defended freedom of teaching independent of Church dogma. Thus, while tracing modern authoritarianism to abstract individualism,[94] he at times came close to asking whether "pure communism"[95] might be the ultimate goal of the social upheavals of the time. Given the state of Italian culture in 1850 under overwhelming Catholic hegemony, Spaventa focuses primarily on the need to conquer the masses and not just the intellectuals in order to guarantee the success of the revolution. This is why he fought the defenders of the application of the liberal principles of scholarly competition to instruction (thus ruling out vigorous state intervention in education and, consequently, accepting continued Catholic control of that social sphere): "Let us assume that fortune and courage are enough to win, and that youth flocks around some illustrious professor. And the people? And the countryside? And the holy ignorance of early youth? While you, elect few [*pleiadi*] young speakers of the public Academy, receive praise and applause in the new Berlin of your dreams, the worker, the peasant, the mother of the people's progeny will learn to distrust you, science and civilization; they will learn to deplore the pride of human intelligence; they will learn that the sovereignty of reason, of which you announce yourselves as the confessors, is the dogma of hell, is original sin, is a rebellion to divine truth. And if in order to fight these deadly doctrines you will stray too far; or, better yet, if you attack your adversaries where they are vulnerable, where you must wound them if you want to beat them, there you will find the penal code, the courts, the fines, the cops and the fortress."[96]

Bonaparte's *coup*, however, dealt a severe blow to Spaventa's rising expectations[97] and quickly forced a reconsideration of the earlier optimistic outlook. In later years, both Bertrando and Silvio were to look back to those days as characterized by illusions and unwarranted hopes.[98] Yet, although

94. Thus, Spaventa writes: "Here, then, is the genesis of authority. At the beginning man is free, and there is no right above and beyond man himself. But he must (and no one knows why) sacrifice his liberty. The sum of the sacrifices made by each man is authority. What remains of individual liberty (which before was everything) is the corpse of this liberty, private authority. Having made this sacrifice and having constituted authority, public life proceeds as follows. The authority turned into a man is the chief of State. This chief generates ministers. The ministers generate a majority. The majority generates the law. The law generates the duties of all citizens. Duties generate obedience. And thus, after innumerable and unnamed generations, out comes the social State, order and the reign of authority. What is the reason for this emanative system? Nothing more than accident or arbitrariness, when one moves from individual right considered as an abstraction in order to reach collective authority." Cf. "Rivoluzione e Utopia," *op.cit.*, pp. 74-75.

95. Cf. Vacca, *Politica e Filosofia...*, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

96. Spaventa, "Rivoluzione e Utopia," *op.cit.*, pp. 37-38.

97. In a letter dated December 16, 1851, Spaventa wrote to his friend De Meis: "There are some times when it seems that rational and necessary laws that govern the life of people are as if suspended, and the idea, the spirit or whatever the hell it is, hides or retreats in the depths of existence and of events so that it is not enough to have the sharpest intelligence and the greatest enthusiasm for speculating in order to discover it and recognize it... I am in a kind of intellectual stupor, having been unable up to now to penetrate the meaning of the latest events." Cf. Spaventa, *Opere*, vol. III, pp. 851-852.

98. Cf. Silvio Spaventa's speech in Rome, 1879, now in Silvio Spaventa, *La Giustizia nell'Amministrazione* (Turin, 1943), p. 32.

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throughout the 1850s Spaventa retreated more and more to his philosophical studies, the earlier political concerns remained. It was no accident that he spent a considerable amount of time during this period attacking the Jesuits in an untiring effort to demolish the Catholic stranglehold on Italian culture. In a series of writings later collected by Gentile and published under the appropriate title *The Jesuit Policy in the 16th and 19th Centuries*, Spaventa exposed the Jesuits' theoretical opportunism whereby in the sixteenth century they supported democratic principles while in the nineteenth, they advocated absolutism—a policy consistent with the earlier one in emphasizing the need to safeguard the Church's immediate political interests: "Today's Jesuits condemn representative orders, strongly defend the *divine right* of absolute principles; attack as a diabolical invention the principle of *popular sovereignty*; they want laws to be made not by the community, but by one only to whom it is communicated, through heredity, an infallible wisdom; they claim that taxes must not be approved by those who pay them, but ordered at the whim of those who collect them, and so on. Those who are not of their opinion are anarchists, communists, etc..."[99] Yet, after a rapid examination of the doctrines of leading sixteenth century Jesuits such as Lainez, Bellarmino, Suarez and Mariano, Spaventa concludes: "Here nothing is missing: social contract, the people's inalienable sovereignty, the delegation of power to the prince, a non-hereditary monarchy, a deliberative senate, laws made by the community, taxes voted on by those who pay them, the right to change the form of government, the justice of those governed and the popular will as a condition of the legitimacy of power, the need for a national assembly to judge the tyrant, and so on. Aren't these the germs of Rousseau's doctrine and of the French Revolution?"[100] This *exposé* of Jesuit political and theoretical opportunism developed into a call for religious freedom as a precondition for a new kind of humanity making possible the eventual displacement of the Catholic Church by the ethical state: "The great enemy of all of them, Jesuits and absolute princes, are the people who no longer believe in the formulae of this or that scholastic, quickly explained and elaborated in the confessional by a minister of the Company, but have some consciousness of their own right in everything in life, and begin to realize that, beyond political despotism there is an even more unbearable and iniquitous one which is the foundation of the first, i.e., spiritual despotism, the tyranny of consciousness. History is now at such a point where it is impossible to touch one without also touching the other; religious freedom leads to political liberty, and the political to the religious one."[101] This strategy for the

99. Spaventa, *Opere*, vol. II, p. 756.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 760.

101. *Ibid.*, p. 811. The reason why in the 16th century the Jesuits could hold such liberal theories is in that ultimately *political* hegemony was guaranteed by *ideological* hegemony: "The principle of sovereignty did not cause much trouble in the 16th century, and those who preached it had no reason to fear that ecclesiastic despotism could incur any danger; there was always a special reserve clause that in certain occasions could annihilate it: above the people, natural and immediate receptacle of authority...there was always the power of him who is not subject to any laws or power other than the divine, of which he himself is the interpreter, organ and administrator." *Ibid.*, pp. 811-812.

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attainment of bourgeois ideological and cultural hegemony, however, is not based on traditional liberal assumptions but on Hegelian theory. In Spaventa's interpretation of the latter, the ultimate aim is not the uncritical hypostatization of the status quo to the level of a universally valid institutional framework as in the forced reconciliation by the older Hegel and the right Hegelians, but an instrumental defense of bourgeois institutions as transitional and as conducive to the genesis of social individuality.[102]

Contrary to neo-idealist interpretations,[103] this shift from primarily *political* to purely *cultural* concerns during the 1850s extends what Vacca identifies as the three main achievements of the 1840s (i.e., the critique of the right of property as *innate*, the central role of the masses in the revolutionary process, and a preliminary outline of a theory of the ethical state)[104] and feeds increasingly into the politics of the moderates. Following Gramsci's analysis of the Italian Risorgimento, Vacca bemoans this development of subordination of the radical elements (the Jacobins of Garibaldi's *Partito d'Azione*) within Cavour's moderate program as a shortcircuiting of real revolutionary possibilities by restricting radical developments within the programs of the Northern industrial bourgeoisie in what later became characterized as a "passive revolution" (i.e., lacking broad popular support): "The increasingly more theoretical level upon which his political commitment shipwrecks, and his struggle for a primarily philosophical reform, mark his definitive loss of democratic political battles and subsequently more broadly progressive struggles after Unification, up to the gloomy and irascible isolation after 1876."[105] But as Galasso has shown[106]—and as will be elaborated later in conjunction with Gramsci's reconstruction of Italian history—Gramsci tended to examine the Italian Risorgimento primarily in terms of his own political

102. Given this state of affairs, it is not difficult to see how this Spaventean concern could feed directly into the project of national independence. It is only within that context that social emancipation can truly take place under the guidance of the *national* ethical state. Thus the problematic of nationality becomes the precondition for social individuality. Spaventa writes: "[Nationality] for us has never been a simple geographical expression, as the Austrian minister used to say. It is more than mere custom, language, art and literature, feelings and institutions. This nationality we have already had for sometimes and we are not satisfied with it. Nationality is for us unity: free, powerful and living unity as State. And why do we want this unity as a free State? Because we know that only in unity in a free State can we freely unfold all the powers of our lives; only in that can we be and know ourselves as truly ourselves. This is already an implicit confession that up to now we have not been in all forms of our existence what we could have actually been." Cf. Spaventa, *Opere*, vol. II, p. 427.

103. Thus, Guido De Ruggiero, in his *Hegel* (Bari, 1948), p. 278, sees this shift as "an involution of the system." Elsewhere, in *Il Pensiero Politico Meridionale nei Secoli XVIII e XIX* (Bari, 1922), p. 301, De Ruggiero argues that Spaventa's "abstract rationalism" had as its outcome a fusion with "the 'patriots' " political praxis and generated the philosophy of the Italian liberal Right. A doctrine that deduced authority and law from freedom... had to be useful to the historical action of those minorities who carried out unification and to which only a rationalistic fiction could attribute a title of universal representation. The energetic assertion of the State's authority, deduced from the very principles of self-consciousness, corresponded to the practice of centralization and bureaucratization..."

104. Vacca, *Politica e Filosofia...*, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

106. See Giuseppe Galasso, "Gramsci e i Problemi della Storia Italiana," in Pietro Rossi, ed., *Gramsci e la Cultura Contemporanea* (Rome, 1969), pp. 305-354.

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problematic of a potential alliance with the peasants, thus overestimating the real revolutionary options of earlier times. It is therefore unfair to criticize Spaventa for not choosing alternatives that were never really available to him. Confronting what was to become a major issue of the next century of socialist history—the revolutionaries' attitude toward bourgeois revolutions in contexts of social and economic underdevelopment—Spaventa opted for a bourgeois *ethical* state which, unlike the *liberal* variety based on *abstract* individualism, had as its fundamental task the creation of conditions leading to the genesis of *social* individuality. Although it is true that any mention of communism and socialism disappears from Spaventa's later discourse, the remaining task is to create a new type of humanity. The function of the ethical state is precisely to mediate between the given civil society and a society of social individuals within a reconciled universal community of States, which Spaventa identified as Hegel's Absolute Spirit.[107] In Vacca's words: "it is an original form of State having an active and driving function toward civil society, in the attempt to overcome its own divisions from it, produced by civil society: a state at the basis of which there is an increasingly larger political participation by citizens; and whose political and pedagogical goal is the gradual development of political participation and of the material and cultural elevation of the community."[108]

Spaventa's work did tend to move increasingly toward formalism, and in his analysis of Hegel's ethics he went so far as to consider as a universal feature of the modern state the division of labor and, consequently, class divisions.[109] Yet, he did not reify bourgeois social relations to the level of *natural* laws, but saw the laws of political economy as *ethical* in character and whose unfolding is throughout subject to human determination.[110] The earlier political and philosophical thrusts of 1851 became increasingly locked within a general theory of the ethical state which not only had no chance whatsoever of being translated into a political project to create a new, broadly based type of national culture, but which was constantly under attack from the right both by the positivists and the "orthodox" Hegelians. Thus, the philosophical and political rear-guard action in which Spaventa became entangled during the last year of his life was not the consequence of any theoretical failure on his

107. Cf. Spaventa's *Principi di Etica,* originally published in 1869, now in *Opere*, vol. I, pp. 611-790.

108. Vacca, *Politica e Filosofia...*, *op.cit.*, p. 204.

109. Thus, he writes: "*Everyone works*, and everyone *works for everyone else*. The *universality* of labor becomes *distinguished* and *particularized*, in conformity with the *particularity* of needs: the *division of labor*... This *division* of public wealth (which is both cause and universal effect), although under this double aspect could seem, in its indefinite multiplication, accidental and arbitrary, yet in its fundamental scheme is *necessary* and *rational*. Its concrete existence is the *distinction of classes*: a distinction which in some way or other is there and will always be there, no matter what anyone says. It will no longer be there only when, e.g., the fields will yield wheat by themselves, the wheat will become flour by itself, and the flour bread; and when fish will catch themselves and fry themselves, etc. Each class has its own particular basis for subsistence, its own work, needs, satisfactions, goals, culture, customs, etc. This distinction is by no means purely *natural*; it is not a caste; the individuals belong to this or that class according to intelligence, ability, chance, etc." *Ibid.*, p. 767.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 769.

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part, but mainly the result of an increasingly stagnant and conservative socio-political situation. That he was forced in a defensive position with no alternative but to safeguard his historicized version of Hegelianism had nothing to do with the inner vitality of his positions.

*Critical vs. Orthodox Hegelianism*

Although with the possible exception of De Sanctis (who, however, was mostly concerned with aesthetics) Spaventa was by far the most important member of the Neapolitan Hegelians in terms of the general theoretical framework that he sedimented into Italian culture and which Gramsci indirectly inherited, he was by no means without opponents within the Hegelian camp itself. In fact, after 1865, the Neapolitan Hegelians, following the German experience of a rift between left and right wings, also split into an "orthodox" and a "critical" wing. While the factions in Naples did not exactly correspond with those in Germany since, e.g., Spaventa's critical wing often sided with German right Hegelians such as Gabler, Fischer and Rosenkranz on many theoretical questions, such as the relations between Hegel's *Logic* and the *Phenomenology*, Spaventa did provide a *left* reading and elaboration of right Hegelianism against Vera's conservative "orthodox" wing. With Hegelianism as the official philosophy of the new Italian state—or so it came to be regarded after 1876 following its decline[111]—the orthodox and critical wings clashed on almost every significant issue that they faced during the decade or so of their theoretical hegemony. It is important to briefly examine the reactionary positions of the orthodox wing in order to fully understand why Spaventa's theoretical trajectory resulted in what at first sight appears as an involution with respect to the bold positions of 1851. Furthermore, this also helps understand why Hegelianism declined rapidly immediately after Spaventa's death.

Even before the clashes with the critical Hegelians, Vera had enjoyed considerable prestige abroad as the leading Italian Hegelian.[112] While Spaventa and the critical Hegelians had been intimately involved in the political clashes of 1848 and their aftermath, Vera spent this whole period abroad aloof from all political confrontations.[113] Up to 1848, in fact, he had been a liberal who had defended with Spaventa the identity of German philosophy and the French Revolution.[114] The unfolding of events, however,

111. Cf. Landucci, "L'Hegelismo in Italia...," *op.cit.*, p. 614.

112. For an excellent account of Vera's fortunes, as well as of a lot of what follows, see Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani di Napoli, op.cit.*, chapter 2, pp. 164-239.

113. This political question explains also why, unlike the violent opposition met by the outspoken Spaventa and De Sanctis when they returned to Naples, Vera received such a warm welcome that many foreign observers were led to mistakenly regard him as the leading Hegelian in Naples. Cf. Oldrini, *ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

114. Thus, in 1843 Vera had written: "German philosophy should bring about in the moral and intellectual order what the French Revolution has brought about in the social and political order. Both have their reason in history and both aim at the same goal. The principle from which they originate is the same; it is the need of science and of freedom... If the results obtained by the French Revolution have been more striking and rapid, it is because it functions in the world of facts and force as its instrument. Philosophy functions in the world of ideas, and its instrument

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quickly turned him into a conservative. Thus, he broke with his liberal friends connected with the journal *Liberté de Penser* and in an article on "La Souveraineté du Peuple," he violently attacked popular insurrections, universal suffrage, the "democratic principle" and other progressive measures, ultimately concluding that "the goal of social life is not the people's health, but order."[115] Unlike Spaventa, who never lost sight of the revolutionary French political model in tentatively charting the future course of the Italian Risorgimento, Vera opted for Bismarck's German State where the Hohenzollerns in alliance with the Junkers successfully prevented the rising bourgeoisie from attaining political hegemony.[116] He did so in spite of the fact that the German and Italian socio-economic situations were qualitatively different, and in the latter a liberal bourgeoisie, although relatively weak, was well on the way of gaining the upper hand over the whole project of national unification under the banner of a "moderate" program.

Thus, the emphasis shifted from a political to a religious revolution. The bourgeoisie need not upset existing power relations: all that was necessary was to introduce Protestantism into Italy. In his only remaining letter to Spaventa, Vera wrote: "Politics is not religion and the politician cannot resolve the problem of religion. This is clear. But it is similarly clear, or so it seems to me, that this 'cannot' shows not only the impotence of politics, but that the problem of religion dominates the political one, and that a nation which does not remake religious consciousness does not remake itself either morally or spiritually or in any other way. There will be the name and the shadow, but not the substance of a *risorgimento*."[117] Where Spaventa theorized the absorption of the Church by the ethical state, Vera not only dreamed of a Protestant Reformation independent of any socio-economic change, but even ended up challenging Cavour on the separation of Church and State.[118] Afraid of the political upheavals taking place in capitalist states such as France and England, Vera opted *tout court* for the authoritarian German State.

This conservative framework clashed with the outlook of the critical Hegelians shortly after De Sanctis, the new rector of the University of Naples in 1861, appointed Vera as a philosophy professor, and the question of the

is thought. Its march is slower and more painful, more silent; but its results will be more stable and decisive." Augusto Vera, "Logique de Hegel," *op.cit.*, p. 382. As quoted in Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani di Napoli, op.cit.*, p. 244.

115. This essay is reprinted in Augusto Vera, *Mélanges Philosophiques* (Paris and Naples, 1862), pp. 242-266. Quoted by Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani, op.cit.*, p. 245.

116. Already in November, 1859, Silvio Spaventa realized that the German model would not do, given the huge gap between the cultural sphere and its socio-economic base. He wrote: "Germany is still politically subservient, and does not amount to a true nation because, free as it is in soul and thought, it still retains the feudal principle of man's superiority over man, of group over group, and of nation over nation... Feudalism, authentic son of the German spirit, has survived its universal ruin in the only country in which it was a natural and necessary result. The religious reform, progress in knowledge, the great political upheavals of the first half of this century, have not been sufficient to eradicate it in Germany." Cf. Silvio Spaventa, *Dal 1848 al 1861, op.cit.*, pp. 272-273.

117. As quoted in Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani, op.cit.*, p. 250.

118. Augusto Vera, *Il Cavour e Libera Chiesa in Libero Stato* (Naples, 1871).

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death penalty came to be hotly debated. To the extent that in Vera's authoritarian conception the State had primacy over and above all individuals, he had no qualms in endorsing the death penalty: "It seems appropriate to correct the false opinion that the State cannot mete out death, since it is not the source of life. The fact is that, like everything else, we owe our life to the State. Actually, when it is claimed that life comes from God, this is. . . a meaningless proposition. Although it may come from God, yet we receive it in the State, through the State and the norms, laws and the necessity that constitute the social entity."[119] For his part, Spaventa, who saw the individual as a concrete universal both constituted and constitutive of the State, strongly opposed the death penalty.

Of course, all of these political differences were reflected in more esoteric philosophical differences. Thus, it is not surprising that while for Vera, Hegel meant the end of all philosophy[120] with the philosopher's task reduced to a mere exegetical exercise,[121] for Spaventa, who assigned to Hegelianism the mediational function of bringing about a new, de-provincialized society at the level of the highest achievements of European culture, what was most important was the *new*.[122] Where Vera saw the completed systematic exposition of Hegel's *Logic* and of the *Encyclopedia* as the final arrival point of all philosophy, Spaventa stressed movement as primary and privileged the *Phenomenology*. Thus, according to Vera: "That the *Phenomenology* was published before the system that subsequently came out under the title of *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, is nothing but a subjective and accidental occurrence, while the objective and essential fact is that the system preceded the *Phenomenology*."[123] Ultimately, "the *Phenomenology* is the vestibule, but not the sanctuary."[124] Following the publication of the second edition of Trendelenburg's *Logische Untersuchungen* in 1862 (originally published but largely ignored in 1840), where Hegel's basic categories of a static being and an equally static nothingness are criticized for their inability to yield a becoming,[125] Vera opted for the primacy of absolute knowledge at

119. Augusto Vera, *La Pena di Morte* (Paris and Naples, 1863), p. 22. As quoted in Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani, op.cit.*, p. 263.

120. Thus, Vera claimed that: "Hegel's philosophy closes, in all its constituent parts, philosophy's historical cycle." Quoted in Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani, op.cit.*, p. 169.

121. According to Vera, "After Hegel we must do nothing more than repeat or mechanically comment on his deductions as if they were so many sacramental forms." *Ibid.*, p. 170.

122. In direct reference to Vera, Spaventa wrote: "If there is something that I abhor. . . it is precisely the mechanical reproduction of someone else's doctrine. In philosophers, in true philosophers, there is always something which is more than themselves, and of which they are conscious; and this is the germ of a new life. To mechanically repeat philosophers amounts to suffocating this germ, to prevent it from developing a new and more perfect system." Spaventa, "La Filosofia Italiana. . .," reprinted in *Opere*, vol. II, p. 643.

123. Augusto Vera, *Problema dell'Assoluto*, vol. I (Naples, 1872), pp. 65-70. As quoted in Oldrini, *Gli Hegeliani, op.cit.*, p. 173.

124. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

125. According to Trendelenburg, "Pure being, equal to itself, is quiet; nothingness, which is also equal to itself, is also quiet. How is it that from the unity of two representations in a stasis derives becoming in movement?" Cf. Adolf F. Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen* (Leipzig, 1870), p. 38.

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the expense of the process[126] while Spaventa privileged movement.[127] Thus, while Vera moved closer to an Hegelianism forcibly reconciling all contradictions within the system, Spaventa increasingly emphasized the dynamism of Hegelian philosophy in an effort to salvage its emancipatory character.

The comparison could go on. Vera's polemics against communists (whom he labelled "modern alchemists"),[128] the regressive legislation that he sponsored as a senator[129] or his defense of the beginning of Italian imperialism that he unreservedly praised.[130] But the point has been made. Clearly, the orthodox wing confronted Spaventa and the critical Hegelians with such a conservative outlook that even undertaking to totally refute their views tended to shift theoretical and political discourse considerably toward the right.[131]

The fall of the "historical Right" in 1876 and the coming to power of the Left in Italy was by no means a progressive development. Politically undistinguishable from the Right in terms of ideology and programs, the Left launched what has come to be known as the age of "transformism" when everything changed so that everything could remain the same.[132] Characterized by rampant corruption, social unrest and clientism, it meant the end of the dream of social and cultural autogenesis entertained by Spaventa and the critical Hegelians. Challenged on all fronts by the increasingly more reactionary thrusts of orthodox Hegelians as well as positivists in a generally hopeless political situation, it is not difficult to understand why critical Hegelianism declined so rapidly as to become practically forgotten until the turn of the century when Labriola's Marxism brought to their logical conclusions many of Spaventa's theoretical visions.

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126. Cf. Augusto Vera, "Trendelenburg on Hegel's System," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. VI (October, 1872).

127. Unlike Vera, Spaventa accepts Trendelenburg's challenge: "The merit of Trendelenburg's criticism is to have...called Hegelians back to their duty: of having shaken them from a kind of sleep... They used to say: here we are, on this peak of pure thought, and we do nothing more than watch. They almost forgot that what they watched was thought itself and that thought cannot be watched other than by thinking." Cf. Spaventa, "Le Prime Categorie della Logica," reprinted in *Opere*, vol. I, p. 435.

128. Cf. Augusto Vera, "Les Alchemistes Modernes," in *Mélanges Philosophiques, op.cit.*, pp. 287-295. As Oldrini points out, the communism that Vera attacks is of the utopian variety (*op.cit.*, p. 261). It is interesting, but obviously of no political significance, that after Lassalle visited Italy in 1861, he corresponded with Vera. This correspondence, however, has been lost.

129. Of the two pieces of legislation that Vera sponsored, one dealt with the reintroduction of religious teaching in the universities. Cf. Oldrini, *op.cit.*, p. 231.

130. This support for imperialist adventure was not without racist overtones. In fact, one of his fellow "orthodox" Hegelians wrote a book around that time defending imperialism in terms of the racial superiority of whites. Cf. Raffaele Mariano, *La Razza Nera* (Turin, 1869).

131. Unlike Spaventa's and De Sanctis' work, which gained widespread popularity in the last 70 years, Vera's works and those of his followers were never republished and have forever fallen into a justly deserved obscurity.

132. As Gramsci put it: "It turns out that there has been no essential change in shifting from the Right to the Left: the mess in which the country finds itself is not due to the parliamentary regime (which merely makes public and known what before remained hidden or gave rise to libelous clandestine publications) but to the weakness and organic inconsistency of the ruling

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*Gramsci's Interpretation of Italian History*

When Gramsci undertook his reconstruction of Italian history in order both to explain the existing power configuration as well as to plot a successful revolutionary strategy, he did not pay any special attention to his nineteenth century Hegelian heritage—by that time fully appropriated and ideologically defused by Croce and Gentile. Yet, his account follows the main lines of contemporary liberal historiography and, with the exception of his politically dubious emphasis on the unrealized possibilities of the Risorgimento,[133] is wholly continuous with Spaventa's general analysis. The problem of Italian national unification and independence took the Hegelian form of the determination of the concrete universal. Reminiscent of Spaventa's polemics concerning nationality against the abstract universalism of Vera and the parochial nationalism of Palmieri, Gramsci located *Catholic cosmopolitanism* and *municipal particularism* as the two cultural forms that had to be overcome as a precondition for the constitution of a new national consciousness. Thus, "the formation of Italian national consciousness in Jews provides a valid model for the entire process of formation of Italian national consciousness, both as the dissolution of religious cosmopolitanism as well as particularism, because in Jews religious cosmopolitanism becomes particularism within the context of national states."[134]

All of Spaventa's polemics against Catholic hegemony were further concretized and politicized by Gramsci, who shifted them to the broader level of international power relations. In fact, in his analysis, this explanatory scheme became all the more important since he saw that the economic preconditions for revolution were altogether lacking in Italy. There was neither a well established and dynamic bourgeoisie nor, consequently, any significant proletariat. Thus, "the problem was not so much one of freeing already developed economic forces from antiquated juridical and political fetters, as to create the general conditions so that these forces could arise and develop on the model of other countries."[135] Thus, far from articulating the Second International's model of base and superstructure to explain the unfolding of events, Gramsci analyzed them primarily in terms of struggles for hegemony and the formation of historical blocs.

From such a perspective, the "Risorgimento was possible only as a result of

class and to the great misery and backwardness of the country." Cf. *Quaderni del Carcere, op.cit.*, vol. III, pp. 1977-1978.

133. Cf. Galasso, *op.cit.*, p. 331.

134. Gramsci, *Quaderni del Carcere, op.cit.*, vol. III, p. 1801. This, for Gramsci, also helps to explain why there was no anti-semitism in Italy. The Jews' overcoming of their religious cosmopolitanism corresponded with the birth of that lay spirit which he saw as the source of national consciousness. Thus, in Italy Jews became Italians along with, if not before, everyone else. This destroyed precisely whatever "otherness" in other countries became the target of anti-semitism.

135. *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 747-748. Elsewhere, in vol. III, p. 2018, he writes: "From 1861 to 1876 the government of the Right had only timidly created the general external conditions for economic development: systematization of the governing apparatus, highways, railroads, telegraphs, and had taken care of the finances overtaxed by the wars of the Risorgimento. The Left...had continued the Right's policies with men and slogans from the Left."

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a weakening of the Papacy,"[136] since, to complicate the problem, Gramsci fully acknowledged that the forces of national unification were very weak. According to him, "the traditions, the mentalities, the problems and the solutions were many, contradictory, often of an arbitrary and individual nature, and thus were never seen at that time in a unitary fashion. The forces aiming toward unity were very scarce, dispersed, disconnected, and unable to establish reciprocal ties, and this was the case not only in the 18th century, but up to 1848. The forces opposing those seeking unity (or better, tendentially unitary) were instead very powerful, united in coalitions." Hence, the gradual shift of power took place almost as a result of the default of the dominant side under siege on other fronts: "International factors, and especially the French Revolution, by engaging and wearing out these reactionary forces, tended to strengthen national forces by themselves scarce and insufficient. This is the most important contribution of the French Revolution, very difficult to see and define, but which can be intuited as the decisive weight in giving rise to the Risorgimento process."[137] What Gramsci merely intuited, of course, has long since been fully corroborated. In fact, the very development of that Neapolitan Hegelianism which indirectly became his own intellectual heritage was the direct result of attempts by progressive Southern intellectuals to transpose the ideas of the French Revolution in Italy to trigger similar events.

Given Gramsci's own negative appraisal of the potential for revolutionary outcome of the project of national unification, one would expect him to approve of a general strategy of "war of position" aimed at gradually gaining cultural and ideological hegemony through the creation of the still lacking preconditions for revolutionary changes ushering in the new humanity he envisioned. That was precisely Spaventa's cultural and political strategy from the crushing disappointments of 1851 through the years of the historical Right's political rule, up to his death in 1883. In addition to creating a viable economic infrastructure which was precisely the order of the day—at least in the North[138]—the cultural task seemed to consist in weakening the still very strong Catholic forces through massive state intervention in education, welfare and other social functions carried out by the Church, a preliminary sharp separation of Church and State in order to allow the latter to gradually take over the spiritual functions of the former, and the constant introduction of increasingly larger sections of the population into the new nation's social, political and cultural life. Far from constituting merely the strategy for a "passive revolution" (as Gramsci ended up characterizing the Italian Risorgimento), in retrospect Spaventa's approach takes on all the characteristics of a well thought out war of position in a context where little else seemed more promising.

136. *Ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 1963-1964.
137. *Ibid.*, pp. 1971-1972.
138. For a brief but striking account of the dramatic economic progress being made at that time, see Gaetano Salvemini, *The Origins of Fascism in Italy*, *op.cit.*, chapter 1, "Italy from 1871 to 1919," pp. 1-18.

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Gramsci asked himself the question whether the first period of the Italian Risorgimento should be seen as involving a war of position,[139] but against the thrust of his own argument he refuses to answer in the positive and proceeds to reconstruct how Cavour and the moderates gradually checkmated Mazzini's and Garibaldi's Action Party. Accordingly, this process of taking over control of political direction of events was facilitated not only by Mazzini's lack of awareness of his own political role (in fact, in the Action Party Gramsci sees only Pisacane as coming close to any kind of historical self-consciousness)[140] against Cavour's full realization of his function, but also by the Action Party's failure to develop a Jacobin strategy based on an agrarian policy which would have engaged the overwhelming majority of Italian masses—at that time still largely peasant—in the project of national unification.[141] But as Galasso has shown,[142] Gramsci's argument collapses since, as he himself elsewhere argued, there was very little chance for such a rallying of the peasants around a Jacobin program by the Action Party. Not only were the peasants solidly under Catholic hegemony and thus strongly opposed even to Mazzini's call for a preliminary religious reform,[143] but throughout the whole Risorgimento and even afterward, they remained on very conservative grounds.[144] Furthermore, given the configuration of international power relations at that time, a Jacobin thrust in Italy would almost certainly have run up against another Holy Alliance rather than against the relatively isolated Austrial regime confronted by the moderates' project.

This seemingly paradoxical co-existence in Gramsci of a generally liberal Hegelian reconstruction along with an unrealizable Bolshevik interpretation has been explained in terms of Gramsci's general political and theoretical orientation. His identification of history and politics politicizes all historical reconstructions into historical mediations meant to provide direction in contemporary struggles. Croce's claim that all history is present history is radicalized into present politics by Gramsci, who subsequently accuses Croce of falling into ideology by not pushing this far enough.[145] Thus, although he was engaged in interpreting Italian history long before he became engaged in explaining fascism, his analysis ends up examining the Risorgimento in terms of the political tasks of the 1920s. His ascription of a Bolshevik role to the Action Party is an immediate reflection of his more direct concerns with the problems of political organization of his time.[146] It is an extension of the

139. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 108.
140. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.
141. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
142. Galasso, *op.cit.*, pp. 329-330.
143. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 102.
144. Gramsci himself pointed this out. Cf. *Quaderni del Carcere, op.cit.*, vol. III, p. 1712.
145. In fact, Gramsci claimed that Croce and Omodeo fell into ideology in not seeking "to generate present political forces." Cf. *ibid.*, p. 1984. This is consistent with Gramsci's general theoretical framework whereby scientificity is a function of meaningful social and political mediation. Whatever conceptual structure remains outside of this process automatically becomes metaphysical and ideological. Cf. *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 436.
146. Galasso, *op.cit.*, pp. 351f.

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themes outlined in "The Southern Question" of 1925[147] and the search for an adequate political formula for the revolutionary transformation in Italy.

Although this contradictory situation in Gramsci is explained both in terms of the fragmentary and merely provisional character of his notes on the subject of Italian history, as well as by the primacy in his mind of a more immediate political problematic, it is indicative of a different and deeper quandary involving his whole conception of Marxism. While on the one hand, his Marxism is "a reform and a development of Hegelianism,"[148] the way in which this reform and development is carried out is by taking Bolshevism as its mode of realization. His 1917 characterization of Bolshevism as the living of "the Marxist thought that never dies, which is the continuation of Italian and German idealist thought"[149]—a Spaventian formulation if there ever was one—is later only elaborated but never fundamentally modified. The onesidedness of all knowledge that he vindicated against Bukharin[150] hits also the Hegelian framework which he consequently grounds in praxis as mediational reconstructions whose scientificity is only pragmatically validated. Thus, the foundation of his philosophy of praxis is based on *faith* in two theses: that mankind is on the brink of a new epoch of true humanity—Hegel's Absolute or Marx's communism—and that Leninism constituted its mode of realization. While the first tenet that he inherited from the Spaventian tradition retains its viability, the Leninist model through which he attempted to historicize it and reconstitute it not only was historically obsolete at the time that he was writing, but wrought havoc to the theoretical framework whenever it was allowed to pollute it. But while the Leninist shell tended to suffocate its Hegelian kernel, to the extent that it was immediately tied to practical politics, it rapidly wore out with the passage of time so that what comes down to us as the Gramscian heritage bears very little of the forcibly superimposed Leninist encrustations.

147. Cf. Antonio Gramsci, "The Southern Question," in *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York, 1957), pp. 28-51.
148. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 404.
149. *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci, op.cit.*, p. 123.
150. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 445.

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# FACTORY COUNCILS, GRAMSCI AND THE INDUSTRIALISTS

## by Franklin Adler

Gramsci's conception of factory councils was *idealist* in the best and worst sense. In the best sense, councils were postulated as transcendent bodies, requisite emancipatory agencies through which workers could autonomously generate their own distinctive productive and political life-world. Explicit in this conception was a penetrating, if yet incomplete, critique of the existing capitalist configuration (including the mode of production, the State, and such institutions of civil society as political parties, corporate groups, and syndicates) in terms of that configuration's own arrested potentialities. At the same time, the creative, self emancipatory dimension of Gramsci's council conception stands as a critical norm against which practice by those who would "lead" the proletariat towards the realization of "its" historical project could be measured.

In the worst sense, Gramsci's conception was abstract, disciplined neither by the impressive historical acument nor the sharp comparative analytic distinctions—especially those concerning the State-civil society relationship in the West as opposed to the East—which characterize his later prison writings. In his *Ordine Nuovo* articles, Gramsci envisioned factory councils as the spear-head of offensive proletariat action, yet the efficacy of such bodies and such action was contingent upon a correct assessment of the relation of class forces—not in the abstract, but in the concrete—which, in turn called for a historical understanding of the bourgeoisie at least as probing as that of the proletariat. It is here that Gramsci's conception was tragically inadequate; his faulty analysis of the post-WW I Italian situation, especially the presumed "terminal weakness" of the industrial bourgeoisie, led not only to strategic defeats for the working class when it appeared that revolution was possible, but to deficient defense when it already appeared that reaction was inevitable.

My purpose here is not to consider the historical viability of factory councils in general, although I cannot fail to note in passing their precarious legacy. In Italy and Germany during the post-WW I period they were attacked not only by industrialists, but "betrayed" by the leadership of socialist parties and syndicates. In Lenin's Russia, as well as later during the Prague Spring," they were coercively demobilized by self-proclaimed communist regimes, fearful that such "anarcho-syndicalist" deviations might jeopardize the rationalized productive apparatus and call to question the centralized, non-proletarian basis of the State. It would seem that factory councils are the tragic abandoned children of working-class history; born during brief moments of epochal fracture and revolutionary fervor, thereafter disowned by established leadership which either did not believe that the proletarian child might mature unshepherded to self-sufficiency, or was rather apprehensive that it

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could, rendering superfluous external paternalistic tutelage.

The object of this investigation is more limited in scope. I intend to treat the factory council controversy in post-war Italy at both the ideological and historical levels; that is, what the parties involved took factory councils to be, and, given these perceptions, how they acted in the major conflict which ensued: the April 1920 Torinese general strike. To do so I feel it necessary to pay particular attention to the pre-war industrial development of Torino, as well as the associational-ideological development of the Torinese industrialists, both of which formed the context within which the factory council controversy emerged, as well as "overdetermined" the outcome of the conflict.

More than an Italian phenomenon, factory councils were a distinctively Torinese phenomenon, and without focusing upon such development, contemporary understanding of the controversy would be left in its present more less one-sided, ahistorical state; that is, either an abstract consideration of what Gramsci intended factory councils to be, or how factory councils exclusively related to the history of the Italian proletariat. By perhaps indulging in a one-sided accentuation of how the factory council phenomenon also related to the development of the Torinese industrial bourgeoisie—since a total treatment of the subject is impossible in the limited format of a single essay—I hope to partially compensate for this imbalance. This, I should add, stems from a general methodological concern that Marxists seriously consider bourgeois development as well as that of the proletariat. Failure to do so has resulted in both bad theory and bad practice, flawed analysis and strategic defeats. Gramsci's writings on factory councils, in this respect, is a case in point.

That such an investigation is possible is due to the rich body of material on factory councils and managerial authority available, as well as the uniformly excellent secondary treatments of Italian labor history available, for the most part, only in Italian. In no other case, to the best of my knowledge, did industrialists and Marxists reciprocally react to one another on so sophisticated a public level as was the case in post-war Italy. Largely responsible for this were the two *personaggi* whose theoretical debate occupies a central place in this essay: Antonio Gramsci and his "organic-intellectual" counterpart Gino Olivetti, general-secretary of Confindustria (the Italian industrialists' peak association, founded in mid-1919). Mediating, as we shall see, between the two was the figure of Lenin and the experience of the new Bolshevik State. For Gramsci, Lenin and Bolshevism were the major source of inspiration for his factory council conception, as well as "proof" that a "State of Councils" (as he continued to refer to Russia even *after* 1921) was possible. For Olivetti, Lenin and Bolshevism offered definitive confirmation that absolute managerial authority was a universal technical necessity of industrial society, regardless of regime-type, and that factory councils thus violated productive rationality under capitalism *and* under communism.

Already before the Bolshevik revolution of October 1917, Antonio

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Gramsci, in the name of a "new generation" of Marxists, had begun to criticize the economistic fatalism of the Second International.[1] The revolution would have to be a creative cultural experience for the workers, not the mechanical replacement of "order with order." It would have to be an internally-generated act wherein "they must bring about order in itself," the "possibility of the complete realization of one's human personality for every citizen," leading to "maximum freedom with a minimum of constraints."[2] While this would be a disciplined act, Gramsci maintained an essential distinction between bourgeois discipline and socialist discipline: "Bourgeois discipline is the only force which keeps the bourgeois assemblage intact. One must counter discipline with discipline. Bourgeois discipline, however, is mechanical and authoritative, while socialist discipline is autonomous and spontaneous." [3]

In the Bolshevik revolution, Gramsci saw the realization of these aspirations; the "Rivoluzione Contro il *Capitale*," the creation of an emancipatory proletarian order, and—to invoke a phrase he would use over and over in *Ordine Nuovo*—the *autogoverno delle masse operaie*. If Gramsci immediately become a "Leninist," his "Leninism" was of a particular stamp; not the characteristic professional-conspiratorial Lenin of *What Is to Be Done?* (which he probably had not yet read and never cited), but rather the participatory-democratic Lenin of *State and Revolution* (his most often cited work of the Bolshevik leader). According to Gramsci's friend Piero Gobetti, he "saw the figure of Lenin as representing the heroic impulse of revolution;" Bolshevism as "an incitement to free initiative from below."[4]

Mistaking reality for the opportunistic Bolshevik slogan "all power to the soviets," Gramsci maintained that "the essential fact of the Russian revolution is the establishment of a new type of State: the State of Councils." [5] Though the process whereby soviets and councils were to be divested of all effective authority had already begun, Gramsci throughout 1918-20 continued to believe that they commanded "all power in the country," showing the "essentially democratic character of Bolshevik action."[6] As Gramsci understood Bolshevik practice: "The problem was one of generating a hierarchy, but an open one which could not crystalize in a caste or in classes." Further: "The living nuclei of the hierarchy are the Soviets and the popular parties. The Soviets are the primordial organizations of integration and development, and the Bolsheviks became the party of government since they hold that State power must depend upon and be controlled by the Soviets."[7]

In all fairness to Gramsci, it must be noted that information on Russia was sketchy at best (as he himself admitted in *Ordine Nuovo*) and most often

1. Antonio Gramsci, *Scritti politici* (Rome, 1967), pp. 51-55.
2. Pedro Cavalcanti and Paul Piccone, eds., *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (St. Louis, 1975), p. 75.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
4. Giuseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary* (New York, 1973), p. 114.
5. Gramsci, *Scritti, op.cit.*, p. 191.
6. Cavalcanti and Piccone, *op.cit.*, p. 137.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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came to Italy not directly but via such foreign sources as Max Eastman's "Liberator." As for Lenin's writings, only *Imperialism* and *State and Revolution* began to circulate late in 1918. Yet, as we shall see, it was precisely these two works which would have the most profound impact upon Gramsci; the first he uncritically accepted as an adequate analysis of industrial capitalism, the second served as a primary point of departure for his conception of factory councils, Italian equivalents of the Russian soviets.

A careful reading of *Ordine Nuovo* would indicate—contrary to the view presented by overly-apologetic commentators—that Gramsci did not during 1919-20 minimally comprehend the vast differences which separated the Russian from the Italian situation. In these writings, as opposed to his later treatment of the "Eastern State" and Western State" in the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci suggested that the Russian model could and should be exported and copied. In June 1919 he maintained that Italian communists should emulate the Russian experience thus "saving time and work."[8] In August 1919 he stated that Italian conditions were "not much different" than those of Russia.[9] Political forces and sequences in Italy were judged in direct and unmediated relation to those the Russians encountered: in November 1919 Gramsci stated that the Catholic mass party, the *popolari*, stood to the socialists as Kerensky stood to Lenin;[10] again in November 1919 Gramsci maintained that Italy was in the same condition as Russia during September 1917.[11] Thus, Italy was in a revolutionary situation and an Italian equivalent to the soviets had to be found; this Gramsci would find in the factory council.

The above would suggest that Gramsci was laboring under a triple illusion: first, that Lenin of *State and Revolution* (the least characteristic work) was the real or essential Lenin; second, that what he took to be the nature of the Bolshevik regime (all power to the soviets, State of Councils, etc.) was indeed an accurate rather than merely ideological image of the Russian reality; third, that Italy was in a revolutionary crisis similar to that of Russian experience.[12]

To these three would have to be added still a fourth illusion, based upon Gramsci's reliance on Lenin's theoretical analysis of industrial capitalism in *Imperialism*, rather than conducting his own concrete investigation of Italian industry; namely, that the industrial class under post-war conditions of monopoly capital had become dead-wood, parasitic, mere agents of the big banks, no longer technically competent to administer their factories and preserve their positions of hierarchical authority, no longer capable of maintaining their internal unity against the proletarian onslaught.

As suggested earlier, this illusion was the most costly. One would have thought that after the Torinese industrialists had dealt the workers in general, and the council movement in particular, a stunning defeat in April 1920,

8. Gramsci, *L'Ordine Nuovo, 1919-20* (Turin, 1955), p. 13.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 286.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-19, 48-51, 79-88, 104-105, 123-127, 169-172, 324-327.

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emerging victorious from the longest and most compact general strike yet to have occurred in Italian history, Gramsci would have reconsidered his fundamental premise: that the industrialists' knees had weakened, their backs terminally inclined before the invincible proletariat. There was indication of this in his *Ordine Nuovo* commentary on the April strike: he wrote that the industrialists had conducted themselves with "extreme ability," that they had constituted themselves as a "block of steel" against the workers—indeed, "one word from Confindustria found immediate actuation in every single factory."[13] Yet three months later Gramsci returned to his original position, maintaining that industrialists possessed no more internal cohesion than the French peasants described by Marx in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*. After the factory occupations of August-September 1920—which Gramsci himself later recognized as an essentially defensive action whose discouraging outcome led to mass demoralization rather than revolution—he claimed that industrialists had "become a sack of potatoes, an aggregate of inepts and imbeciles, without political capacity, without internal force."[14]

What did the young Gramsci, solidly grounded in philosophy and literature, know about the nature of industrial organization in general, or the history of Italian industry in particular? What, aside from ill-placed faith that Lenin's analysis of finance capital was both correct and applicable to Italy could have warranted such judgements as: the "captain of industry" had become "fatefully transformed into a speculator, a cavalier of industry;"[15] the "decaying process of capitalism annihilates the captain of industry" while "the developmental process of the communist revolution creates the factory council which substitutes itself for the 'hero' of industrial power."[16] In his *Ordine Nuovo* writings, Gramsci posed these propositions as self-evident truths, in need of little critical reflection or concrete historical treatment. His attention was riveted not upon the industrialists, but rather upon discovering an agent of revolutionary transformation which might enable workers to emancipate themselves from all forms of bourgeois domination (economic, social, political, *and* technico-productive). Hence, his analysis of Italian capitalism and the industrial bourgeoisie was at best *secondary*, a mere "given," the degenerating context which the primary process of worker self-emancipation was to transcend; the former a passive thesis, the latter the active antithesis.

The *soviet*, Gramsci argued, was not a specifically Russian but a universal form; in Italy, the *commissione interna* was the germ of this form.[17] The *commissione interna* had been provided for in a number of Torinese labor contracts before the war in the more advanced industrial sectors (e.g., the automotive industry), but was not generalized until the post-war period. An extension of the workers' syndicate within each factory, the *commissione*

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-123.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
15. Gramsci, *L'Ordine Nuovo, 1921-22* (Turin, 1971), pp. 322-323.
16. *L'Ordine Nuovo, 1919-20, op.cit.*, p. 105.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

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*interna* provided for a functionally limited form of worker representation, primarily ensuring that existing labor contracts were rigorously adhered to and serving as a conduit within the factory for grievances. These bodies had never been conceived as autonomous and antithetical loci of power within the factory; they were contractually prohibited from interfering with productive decisions (the so-called "technical hierarchy of production") and from taking any independent action should no satisfaction be reached in dealing with management (this was the exclusive prerogative of the national syndicate).

The *Ordine Nuovo* program called for a transformation of these *commissioni interne* into *consigli di fabbrica*, or factory councils. Factory councils were to be autonomous both from management and workers' syndicates; they were to be *transformative* rather than *integrative* bodies, representing the workers as *producers* rather than as *wage-earners*, negating rather than affirming "capitalist legality," prefiguring in embryonic form the Proletarian State. As Gramsci put it: "The factory council is the model of the Proletarian State. All the problems which are inherent in the organization of the Proletarian State are inherent in the organization of the council." [18] *Commissioni interne*, as creatures of syndicates, were neither transformative nor prefigurative—they were essentially *defensive* and *competitive*, they were intrinsically products of capitalism and as such never fundamentally challenged the logic of the whole. They did not prepare workers technically, politically, and culturally for revolutionary transformation nor for *autogoverno* within a qualitatively different form of State. Therefore, the *commissione interna* would have to be transformed into a *consiglio di fabbrica*: "The *commissioni interne* are organs of worker democracy which must be liberated from the limitations imposed on them by the industrialists; they must be given new life and energy. Today the *commissioni interne* limit the power of the capitalist in the factory by exercising functions of arbitration and discipline. Developed and enriched they must become tomorrow organs of workers' power which will substitute themselves for the capitalist in all directive and administrative functions. Such a system of workers' democracy (integrated with equivalent peasant organizations) would give form and discipline to the masses, would be a magnificent school of political and administrative experience, enveloping the masses down to the very last man, habituating them to tenacity and perseverance, habituating them to feel like an army in the field which has need of firm cohesion if it does not wish to be destroyed and reduced to slavery. . . Through the committees, held inside the factory with unceasing propaganda developed by the most knowledgeable elements, there would occur a radical psychological transformation of the worker, the masses would be rendered more capable and better prepared for the exercise of power, there would be diffused a consciousness of duties and rights of comrades and workers, all concrete and efficient because it would spontaneously be generated from living historical experience." [19]

18. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

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Workers' syndicates, by their very nature, perpetuated bourgeois hegemony; they were congenitally unfit to pose the question of revolution, much less fundamentally challenge "industrial legality." Factory councils, to the contrary, were counter-hegemonic, irreconcilable with "industrial legality," incapable of being coopted and institutionalized: "The Council is the negation of industrial legality, it tends to annihilate it at each instant, it tends to incessantly conduct the working class toward the conquest of industrial power. The syndicate is an element of legality, and must attempt to have it respected by its members. The syndicate is responsible towards the industrialists, but is responsible towards the industrialists in the same manner in which it is responsible towards its members: it guarantees the continuity of work and salaries, of bread and shelter to the worker and his family. The Council tends, through its revolutionary spontaneity to rouse at every moment the war of classes; the syndicates, through their bureaucratic form, tend to prevent the war of classes from ever being unchained... The syndicate, as a responsible office enmeshed in legality, tends to universalize and perpetuate that legality." [20]

Factory councils were not ideal phantoms summoned forth by Gramsci, but had spontaneously formed in the Fiat factories during the Summer of 1919. They were part of a generalized European working-class reaction against war-imposed discipline once the conflict had ended, when previously mobilized populations demanded immediate realization of promises made by the various governmental propaganda office of a more just and equitable post-war order. Liberal observers like Max Weber and Luigi Einaudi noted that the previous "compulsive" nature of capitalist organizations had begun to break down, as had the "willingness to work" based upon it. Gone were the days, so it appeared, that *padroni* could play the traditional role of *Herr im Hause*; finished, in the popular consciousness, was the age of the "absolute sovereignty of the *imprenditore* in the factory regarding relations between labor and capital," to be replaced—in Einaudi's words—with "a type of rule by consensus." [21]

An extensive treatment of the 1919 European "red wave," much less a detailed account of the spectacular mass unrest which took place in Italy (general strikes, food riots, city-wide looting, factory and land occupations) is beyond our scope here. Nevertheless, it would be appropriate to signal a number of factors which shaped the Italian experience to better comprehend the climate from which factory councils emerged: (1) extreme post-armistice resentment on the part of the working-class against both the government and the repressive labor policy which had been promulgated during the mobilization (it should be noted that unlike France and Germany, there had been no Italian *union sacrée* or *Burgfrieden*; Italian socialists maintained firm opposition to the war, refused to vote war credits, and constituted the

20. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

21. Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, trans. G. Roth and C. Wittich (New York, 1968), vol. I, p. 153; Luigi Einaudi, *La Condotta Economica e gli Effeti Sociali della Guerra* (Bari, 1933), p. 314.

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only official delegation at the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences); (2) manifest mass sympathy for Lenin and the Bolsheviks which led, in part, to an unsuccessful spontaneous insurrection in Torino during August 1917 (one week earlier an official Menshevik delegation visited the city and was greeted with cries of "Viva Lenin!") (3) refusal or incapacity of the Italian government to contain or repress mass unrest after the armistice for fear of exacerbating an already tense domestic and international situation; (4) initial toleration of abuses in authority by *commissioni interne* on the part of industrialists, including the formation of officially unrecognized factory councils; (5) a growing gap between syndical leadership and the rank-and-file stemming from the former's moderation and willingness to exchange salary increases for the intensified use of taylorism and agreement to no-strike clauses.

From the Winter of 1919 to the Spring of 1920, Italy's labor situation was marked by a strike rate of unprecedented magnitude (during the first half of 1920, the number of workers engaged in strikes for economic reasons—excluding general and solidarity strikes—rose to 1,769,000, compared to 877,000 for the second half of 1919),[22] as well as perpetual disruption and indiscipline in the factories even when workers were not on strike.

What preoccupied the industrialists more than the numerous though familiar strikes for salary increases were the increasing challenges to managerial authority, the refusal of the rank-and-file to abide by the hierarchical norms negotiated by their syndical leaders. With the absence of syndicates which could effectively discipline their members and assume full responsibility for agreements they had signed, the institutional framework within which class conflict was to be mediated, channelled, and rationalized had broken down. New organisms, factory councils, were beginning to fill the void separating syndical leaders and the rank-and-file. At first these rather amorphous bodies were overlooked by industrialists for reasons we will later specify; however, once *Ordine Nuovo* gave factory councils a specific direction, articulating an organic program and revolutionary ideology, it became paramount that they be actively combatted. This they would first do ideologically; later, when an opportune pretext presented itself, they would do so by force, finding willing accomplices among syndical leaders, equally threatened and desirous of putting a definitive end to the "factory council experiment."

The industrialists entrusted major responsibility for organizing the ideological and syndical campaign against factory councils to the general-secretary of Confindustria, Gino Olivetti.

Olivetti (no relation to manufacturers of office-machines) had been identified with the formation of industrial associations since the very first *sindacato padronale*, the Lega Industriale di Torino, had been founded in 1906. In that year, at the age of twenty-six, Olivetti became general-secretary of the Lega Industriale, an administrative position he would hold as well in the network of successive industrial associations which radiated outward from

22. Gaetano Salvemini, *The Origins of Fascism in Italy* (New York, 1973), p. 251.

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the city of Torino: to the region of Piemonte (Federazione Industriale Piemontese, 1908); to the entire northern Torino-Genova-Milano industrial trangle (Confederazione Italiana del'Industria, 1910); and finally to the national level (Confindustria, 1919). A laywer and never an industrialist in his own right, the erudite, cosmopolitan Olivetti was recognized, by virtue of the scope of his intelligence and the breadth of his travels, as a prodigious figure in the liberal circles of Torino. Initially chosing a career as an industrial organizer rather than a politician, he became both the theoretician and dynamo behind the effort to give the industrial class an associational framework equal if not superior to that of the proletariat. In addition to his position with Confindustria, Olivetti was elected in 1919 to the Italian parliament as a liberal candidate, maintaining his seat until the traditional legislature was transformed into a corporatist body under fascism.

Though Gramsci derisively referred to him as the "archangel of the bolshevik demon" and correctly identified him as the major antagonist to factory councils among Confindustria's high-command,[23] Olivetti—as a Jew and as a liberal—remained a suspect personality to the fascists as well, maintaining his Confindustria post, against formidable fascist pressure, by virtue of his wit, competence, ideological dexterity, as well as the unequalled autonomy he was able to strategically preserve for Confindustria within the developing corporatist State. In the days immediately preceding the March on Rome, Olivetti had been attacked by the major fascist publicist Giovanni Preziosi—a defrocked priest, inveterate anti-semite, and so thoroughly malevolent that even Mussolini countenanced his presence only with difficulty—as "an instinctive enemy of fascism," a "living incarnation of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion," possessing secret ties to the socialists.[24] In 1926, Olivetti was tried before a specially-constituted fascist "court of honor" which, while clearing him of anti-fascist charges, nevertheless judged him—given his political origins and his entire "typically-liberal spiritual formation"—a "fascist by adaptation."[25] Forced to finally resign as general-secretary of Confindustria in 1933, upon direct orders from Mussolini who scornfully referred to him as the "Duce of Industry," Olivetti died in Argentina during the Second World War, having fled Italy in 1938 after the Nazi-inspired racial laws were instituted.

In order to fully comprehend Olivetti's critique of factory councils, organically deduced from a comprehensive technocratic-productivist conception of industrial relations, one must begin with a consideration of pre-war development in Torino, for it was in Torino that industrialists developed the most self-conscious understanding of their "function," just as it was in Torino that workers, through the assistance of *Ordine Nuovo*, developed the most self-conscious alternative vision of an industrial order. Unlike Milano, which was the banking capital of Italy, Torino was essentially an industrial city; as Gramsci wrote, "Torino is not the capitalist city *par*

23. *L'Ordine Nuovo, 1919-20, op.cit.*, pp. 49, 109.
24. *La Vita Italiana*, July 15, 1922, August 15, 1922, September 15, 1922, October 15, 1922.
25. Historical Archive, Unione Industriale di Torino, folder "Vertenza Olivetti."

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*excellence*, but the industrial city *par excellence*."[26]

Even by Italian standards, Torino experienced industrialization relatively late. Until the turn of the century, by all common quantitative measures (e.g., percentage of total population involved in industry, concentration of firms, motor-power employed), it lagged well behind Milano and Genova. Despite its close proximity of the Alps, electricity in the region surrounding Torino was less diffuse than even Veneto. During the first decade of the new century, however, Torino underwent a total transformation, experiencing the highest rate of industrial growth in Italy, both in terms of the mechanization of its developing industries, as well as in the increase of its industrial population. Chief beneficiary of this trend was the emergent key sector of Torinese industry, machine-manufacturing (of which the automotive industry, principally Fiat, was the main component). Whereas the total industrial population of the city roughly doubled during the six years between 1905 and 1911, the increase in this sector was nearly five-fold.[27]

The basis of Torino's late but intensive industrial development was primarily the utilization of cheap electric power and sophisticated technology. Unburdened with older unmechanized and semi-mechanized plants, Torino developed virtually *de novo* with the assembly-line and rationalized factories. The very language of the Torinese industrialists was that of a "new class," a *bourghisia del lavoro*, as they put it, distinct from the traditional, pre-industrial bourgeoisie, whom they considered parasitic, as well as the older "dependent" industrialists who owed their existence to State tutelage.

This new *borghesia del lavoro* maintained an "enlightened" perspective with regard to workers' syndicates and reform socialists, fellow members of an "industrializing bloc" which jointly overcame the static politics of the traditional merchant-professional ruling elite of the citry, replacing it with policy oriented towards rapid industrial growth, vocational training, improved social services, and modernization of the urban-regional infrastructure. At the city level such collaboration was realized in the form of a joint *promozione municipale*; at the national level these enlightened industrialists and reform socialists became the twin pillars of Giolitti's progressive regime.

What marked the Lega Industriage di Torino as Italy's first modern industrial association was its very form; that of a *sindacato padronale*. Implicit in the very conception of a *sindacato padronale* was the recognition that class conflict was not an epochal phenomenon, destined to ultimately disappear, but had rather become a permanent fact of modern social life. Older paternalistic concepts of consensual or non-conflictual labor relations had no place in the Lega's world-view. While Milanese industrialists manifested an aversion toward the adoption of such a "tainted" term (*sindacato*), much less the appropriation of this combative form for fear that

26. *Scritti politici, op.cit.*, p. 304.
27. Mario Abrate, *La Lotta Sindacale nella Industrializzazione in Italia* (Turin, 1967), p. 22.

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it would suggest *de facto* recognition of workers' syndicates, the Lega made recognition of workers' syndicates the necessary point of departure in an attempt to regulate and institutionalize labor relations, and, by so doing, hoped that the continuity of production would no longer be interrupted by "impulsive" and unmediated agitation on the part of workers. The *sindacato padronale*, although combattive when the need arose, was viewed as an equalibralizing and pacifying agency, not, as was stated by Olivetti in the first issue of the Lega's bulletin, "to impede or deny the progressive economic and moral betterment of the working class whose rights it understands and recognizes, but rather to avoid and prevent the damage of disorderly and impulsive movements."[28] The Torinese industrialists, with regard to labor, saw themselves as "pragmatic men"—"We recognize the workers' syndicates and deal with them:" "We industrialists are people who in general do not engage in abstract discussions, nor study questions uniquely from a theoretical perspective: we live in reality and for reality... It is precisely for that reason that we can not deny those phenomena which the new times have brought and cannot fail to recognize, in so far as it has a real and serious basis, the workers' movement. It is rather the presupposition of our organization and, as such, part of its very concept, that in the realm of economics, there are no longer isolated individuals nor interests, but the one and the other so interpenetrate that no modification which affects the conditions of an individual or of an interest is without bearing on the totality of other individuals and interests. Beyond that, the facts of everyday life both here and abroad indicate that it is not by virtue of an *a priori* negation that we can refuse to see that which is happening before our very eyes."[29]

Both the liberal economist Luigi Einaudi, as well as Olivetti, looked forward to a decline in Italy's impulsive, violent, and erratic pattern of labor conflict with the growing strength and reciprocal institutionalized mediations of workers' and industrialists' syndicates. This, they argued, had been the experience of the "more advanced nations." According to Einaudi, whose logic is strikingly similar to modern deterence theory: "In the same manner that inventories of deadly weapons may serve to make the outbreak of war more difficult by virtue of the growing weight of its consequences and the major sentiment of responsibility by governments; so in the realm of industry the existence of strong and combative leagues of industrialists and workers will be a factor of social peace... This will be more likely in that negotiations will not be conducted by single employers and representatives of their workers, but by the executive councils of the two leagues or federations... Experience demonstrates that in the nations where these systems of conflict have been established, the occurrences of violent conflict are diminished."[30] Olivetti, observing how the institutionalization of syndical practice in England, Germany and the United States contributed to a greater continuity of production, in the interests of both capital *and* labor, stated

28. *Bollettino della Lega Industriale*, I:1 (January, 1907).
29. *BLI*, IV:5 (May, 1910).
30. *Corriera della Sera*, July 31, 1906.

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that "the class struggle became more calm, more civil, more orderly and more useful; conflicts broke out less frquently and the economic and moral condition of the working-class in particular was elevated."[31]

However, the Torinese industrialists drew a fundamental distinction between recognition of workers' syndicates for the purpose of negotiating salary increases, as opposed to their absolute refusal to compromise the unitary nature of managerial authority within the factory, the "directing function," as Olivetti referred to it. Here the central point of contention later to surface in the 1919-20 factory council controversy already received treatment by Olivetti in 1911: "Above all, however, the Lega Industriale is opposed to any intrusion by the workers' organizations into the technical ordering of production. It is an argument that I believe is essential for our industry...it is not possible to allow a workers' syndicate to enter the factory and constitute an authority counterposed to that of the industrialist, a competing authority which might impede the efficiency of labor, as well as the development of production as planned by him. The function of capital in industry is essentially a directing function."[32]

Olivetti, on behalf of the industrial associations, would remain firm with regard to the necessity for absolute managerial authority in confrontation with both *Ordine Nuovo*, as well as fascist labor leaders afterward. Recognition of workers' syndicates did not constitute renunciation of such authority, it was rather viewed as an instrumental step toward regulating those conflicts which revolved around distributive demands, not "the technical ordering of production."

Strongly influenced by Frederick W. Taylor's work, which he read in English as soon as it was published and then integrated into the Lega's ideology, Olivetti became a "productivist" virtually a decade before the wave of post-war productivism inundated Europe. The core of productivism was the conception of "production" as dynamo or mainspring of national development, the essential base upon which all other social problems rested. Previous conflictual ideologies based on scarcity addressed themselves to the problems of distribution: a zero-sum struggle in which the gain of one party could only be extracted from the equal scarifice or loss of the other.[33] Productivism not only represented an escape from—or rather partial resolution of—such zero-sum conflict by increasing the absolute level of wealth, but in the context of a relatively poor and developing nation like Italy, signalled an escape from an endemic pattern of misery, demographic disequilibrium, incessant social unrest and wide-scale emigration. Thus, "distribution," heretofore the contentious center of the "social problem," was relegated to a subordinate position—contingent and derivative of a new ersatz-center, "production." Similarly, the primacy of class conflict was

31. *BLI*, I:1 (January, 1907).
32. *BLI*, IV:5 (May, 1910).
33. Charles Maier, "Between Taylorism and Technology: European Ideologies and the Vision of Industrial Productivity in the 1920s," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5:2 (1970).

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replaced—based as it was on *distribution*—by an instrumentalist universe of objectively necessary functions within a "class-neutral" hierarchy of competence and command whose internal logic was oriented toward the attainment of optimal efficiency through means-ends, input-output calculation. Indeed, the most frequently repeated phrase of Olivetti—the industrialists's credo—was "to achieve the maximum effect with the minimum force." Such was posed as the standard for all purposive social action (even that of workers' syndicates), but especially that of the industrialist in the direction of his factory. Olivetti made explicit the linkage between productivism, functionalism and optimality: "A modern theory says that each organ has its functions and that each function has its organ; and the theory advanced in the field of psychology has found application even in the field of social relations. Sociologists have wished more than once to demonstrate that the laws which regulate and dominate the human body can be adapted to the social body...Specialization has thus found new and important applications: for every work to be performed, for every function to exercise, for every objective to attain, one has created and creates the conditions, the ambience, the organs most adapted, so that such work may be performed, the function exercised, the objective attained in a more perfect and complete manner and with the minimum expenditure of energy."[34]

With this framework, Olivetti gave the industrialist a new and more modern source of legitimation; no longer was his authority based solely upon traditional social standing, moral rectitude, or even financial risk, but rather upon specialized competence and the "social function" he performed: "The function of capital in industry is essentially directive: while on the one hand, the industrialist assumes the risk of the enterprise and thus sees its dangers and advantages; on the other, he finds himself, through his preparation, in the best position to technically order the factory according to a pre-established plan, which consequently enables him to realize that cardinal principle of political economy expressed by the phrase 'to achieve the maximum effect with the minimum force'."[35]

Such an ideological conception was, as suggested earlier, intimately related to the particularly intensive Torinese industrial experience, one of rapid growth based on technical innovation and dominated by a "new class" of "captains of industry." By the outbreak of World War One, Giovanni Agnelli, head of Fiat, had twice visited Henry Ford's factories in Detroit, even building one of his Fiat factories in Poughkeepsie, New York. Shortly after the war, this "Napoleon of the European Automobile Industry"—as Samuel Gompers called him—constructed his famous Lingotto factory, the first in Italy built with reinforced concrete and recognized by a visiting National Association of Manufacturers delegation as "the most perfect American-styled factory." More than two kilometers long, it contained assembly-lines so well-integrated that the velocity of production was 80% faster than the

34. *BLI*, IV:4 (April, 1910).
35. *Ibid.*

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pre-war Fiat rate.[36] In Torino, the accentuation of productive rhythm and output, as well as the capacity to regulate the factors of production in accordance with the efficient use of available technologies, labor, and raw materials had been a demonstrable fact as much as the basis for a new ideology. Both Piero Gobetti and Antonio Gramsci repeatedly marveled at this unique industrial infrastructure that the *borghesia del lavoro* had constructed in Torino, much as Marx had done earlier in some famous passages in the *Communist Manifesto*, praising the technical accomplishments of these "unknowing grave-diggers."

Given these functionalist-productivist premises, Olivetti's posture with regard to workers' syndicates was one of encouraging their mediating-institutional role, while at the same time restricting their competence to questions of distribution, material *rivendicazioni*, salaries: "We ought not be *a priori* negators of the modern workers' movement, we must rather confront it, redirect it to its real function."[37] According to the logic of productivism, higher salaries could only be obtained with increased output, and this, in turn, was dependent upon a disciplined hierarchy in the factory, allowing the industrialist to order the factors of production in accordance with the principle of optimality: "The syndicate is free to tutor with all the means permitted by law and also with the strike the class that it represents when it is a question of attaining an economic advantage for the workers or of contributing to their moral elevation. But, at the same time, the benefits obtained for the masses through this action ought to be real and not ephemeral. And ephemeral is precisely each concession that the workers' syndicates might seek to obtain limiting the industrialist's freedom of action, cutting or diminishing in him that thrust of initiative which he who is in command loses the possibility to order his machinery and to utilize the work-force in a manner so as to attain with the minimum force the maximum production, goes inescapably toward ruin."[38] Thus, the Lega Industriale's position was conciliation on economic questions and intransigence on those issues which concerned the technical ordering of production and factory discipline: "industry can grant every economic concession whenever the potentiality of the firm can support it, but cannot accept compromises on the directive function which is the duty of the industrialist."[39]

Nothing better illustrated this pre-war attempt at institutionalizing labor conflict through yielding material concessions in exchange for recognition of managerial prerogatives than the contract negotiated between FIOM and the Consorzio delle Fabbriche Automobili in Torino during December 1911. The former was the best-organized and most prestigious labor syndicate in Italy; for more than seven years, it had led and negotiated every workers' initiative in the machine-manufacturing sector. The latter had been formed a month before contract negotiations by Olivetti and Agnelli of Fiat. Tempered by

36. Valerio Castronovo, *Giovanni Agnelli* (Turin, 1971), pp. 326-327, 341.
37. *BLI*, IV:4 (April, 1910).
38. *BLI*, III:4 (March, 1909).
39. *BLI*, VI:1 (January, 1912).

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"rigid discipline" among its members (including the deposit of a blank check which could be placed in circulation for violations of discipline), the Consorzio hoped to contain the "German tactic" of FIOM—striking one firm at a time, serially generalizing concessions won—by instituting a unitary labor contract which would apply to all of Torino's auto sector.

During 1910-11, the automotive industry had entered a period of great expansion in which production could not keep pace with demand. Above all, it was necessary to avoid any interruption of work and proceed with a radical technological transformation of existing plant facilities. Such imperatives were reflected in the newly negotiated contract: on the one hand, FIOM obtained higher wages and shorter hours than any previous contract had provided for in Italy, as well as exclusive syndical recognition in the form of having new workers to the sector recruited only from FIOM's employment offices and having dues deducted from its members' paychecks; on the other hand, the Consorzio obtained the abolition of *commissioni interne*, the right to fire without notice, the end to any "tolerance" with regard to established work schedules, the deposit of a "caution" by each worker of a week's salary, and—most important—a compulsory process of conciliation which had to be exhausted before any strike could be declared.[40]

The rank-and-file, however, rejected the contract; led by an autonomous syndicate dominated by revolutionary-syndicalists, they declared a strike, thus violating one of the contract's major provisions, if not the very *raison d'être* of the regulatory initiative. The conflict ended with the Consorzio's complete victory. Retracting all of their previous concessions and imposing a new *regolamento*, the industrialists finished by unilaterally enforcing those necessary provisions to guarantee managerial authority through their superior syndical strength. There ensued the usual recriminations between maximalists and minimalists within the ranks of labor, however, the organic weakness of the syndicate stood revealed: the rank-and-file had confidence neither in their leaders, nor in the reformist syndical policy of trading-off hierarchical subserviance for material benefits. Yet, without a potent unitary force, workers could not complete with the better-disciplined industrialist syndicate.

As we shall see, the above pattern would repeat itself in the post-war period. The industrialists, for their part, would again be unsuccessful in coopting labor through the creation of an institutional partnership from FIOM leadership which was to be delegitimated in much the same way as it had been delegitimated by the revolutionary-syndicalists in 1911. Once again, confronted by no organic worker force, the industrialists would triumph.

Industrialists entered the post-war period anticipating more successful development of the institutionalized syndical practice they had attempted to establish in the anti-bellum era. Throughout the war, Olivetti had counseled individual industrialists to be as conciliatory as possible, not to take full

40. Abrate, *op.cit.*, p. 91; Paolo Spriano, *Storia di Torino Operaia e Socialista* (Turin, 1972), pp. 218-20; Valerio Castronovo, *Economia e Società in Piemonte dall'Unita al 1914* (Milan, 1969), pp. 305-307.

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exploitative advantage of the repressive mobilization labor policy; he anticipated an outbreak of post-war agitation when the State would no longer act as a one-sided tutor of their class interest, and hoped that such conciliation might lessen the intensivy of such agitation. Olivetti himself actually gave a deposition in favor of the arrested "leaders" of the August 1917 insurrection in Torino, arguing that this had been caused by economic hardship and food shortages, not a subversive conspiracy.

A new wave of Taylorism inundated industry with the translation into Italian of that author's principal work in 1919, as well as the general interest in "rationalization" stemming from productive innovations already undertaken during the war. Given their concern to "achieve the maximum effect with the minimum force," and the growing expense of labor (the relative equalization of Italian salaries with those of the major European powers, and the consequent loss of Italy's competitive advantage based upon cheap labor), Confindustria encouraged technical innovation, greater cooperation between science and industry, and increased mechanization. Thus, the 8-hour day and minimum salaries were conceded in exchange for increased Taylorism and managerial authority in many of the major labor contracts. In the hope that they might ensure the tranquility necessary to renovate their plants and further rationalize the labor process, industrialists opened the post-war period with a manifestly cooperative attitude toward workers' syndicates, in particular the socialist CGL.

Once again, the Torinese group led the way by being the first to concede the 8-hour day, minimum salaries, wage increases, cost of living bonuses, and further extension of the *commissioni interne*. The model contract, in this regard, was one concluded between FIOM and AMMA (an extension of the former automotive Consorzio). This contract included all the concessions granted in the ill-fated 1911 accord, though was to be for longer duration and contained a rather arduous, multi-leveled procedure of compulsory arbitration, leading ultimately to intervention by the national confederations of industry and labor before a strike could be declared.

As in 1911, agreement was quickly reached between the leaders of the two respective syndical bodies, but—as Giuseppe Maione notes—they would soon find themselves "before an unforeseen phenomenon which neither of the two desired: the rise of a worker rebellion which had the force to up-end all the conditions of accomodation which in this 'delicate' period of economic reconstruction seemed necessary and auspicious."[41]

Once again, FIOM proved to be an unreliable partner, incapable of controlling its rank-and-file. For a month FIOM launched a concerted propaganda campaign, signallying the 'historical significance" of the 8-hour day "conquest," as well as the need to "demonstrate to the industrialists that they were worthy of that which had been conquered." The truce which the industrialists had considered as the essential condition of the pact was broken

41. Giuseppe Maione, "Il Biennio Rosso: Lo Sciopero della Lancette," *Storia contemporanea*, III:2 (June, 1972).

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within a month by spontaneous worker agitations. These focused on the felt inadequacy of the syndicate *per se* as transformative vehicles, capable of fundamentally altering the structure of capitalist enterprise, rather than seeking in subaltern status accomodation within that framework. Partial concessions by industrialists only stimulated rank-and-file criticism over the very nature of capitalist organization: not increase in piece-rates, but the very institution of piece-work itself which set one worker against another; not submission or cooperation with the productive hierarchy controlled by management, but worker self-government. It was in this infectious atmosphere of spontaneous mass demands, revolutionary in essence, and worker estrangement from the unresponsive bureaucratic syndicates, that Gramsci's writings on factory councils began to unfold in the pages of *Ordine Nuovo*.

Initial industrialist response to these agitations was rather bland. This was due, in part, to the as yet incomplete process of associational restructuring, but equally important was their fear of further exacerbating the insurrectionary climate which characterized the period from Spring 1919 (food riots, looting, land and factory occupations, general strikes) till the Spring of 1920, when, in reaction to the April general stike, they first began to show their strength. *Commissioni interne* were extending their power beyond contractual norms, factory councils were being formed—yet no action, other than calling these infractions to the attention of the respective syndicates, was taken. Apprehension was much in evidence at a July 29, 1919 meeting, the Confidustria's delegate council, presided over by Olivetti. In Alessandria, the Camera del Lavoro had dispatched a corps of red guards to a textile firm which was ordered to pay a monthly tax to the syndical body. Another firm in central Italy was forced to consign an automobile to a band of red guards who, after consuming all its petrol, returned for refueling.[42] Still, the industrialists were passive.

Had, as Gramsci thought, the industrialists' knees irrevocably weakened? Publicly, Olivetti proclaimed that post-war concessions and general "permissiveness" were manifestations of enlightenment; privately, he admitted to "imperfect organization" and "indiscipline" within the ranks. Yet "enlightenment" was no mere ideological cover to mask internal weakness—Olivetti still had faith that Confindustria and the socialist labor confederation, the CGL, could reconcile their programmatic differences and shunt the dramatic discharge of post-war class conflict back within the framework of "industrial legality." To do so, the respective syndical bodies would have to better discipline their members, while the emergent revolutionary force—of which *Ordine Nuovo* was the purest expression—would have to be undermined.

These concerns were reflected in Olivetti's editorial "In Tema di Economia Capitalistica," written for the inaugural issue of Confindustria's journal *L'Italia Industriale*. His major target was the "new socialist publications"

42. *L'Italia Industriale*, I:1 (July, 1919).

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which advocated "a type of urban-industrial communism" based upon an "Italian reproduction of Russian sovietism." These, he argued, had misunderstood industrialists' enlightenment for weakness. For years, rather decades, the 8-hour day and minimum salaries had been the major revendications of the working class. Now that Italian industry had taken the "daring step"—"too daring according to many, including non-industrialists" —of conceding them without a strike, proof that the present capitalist regime was capable of cooperating with organized labor and satisfying its basic demands, these "new organizations" mistakenly perceived this as terminal agony and proclaimed the immanent collapse of capitalism: "Industrialists conceding without strikes reforms which had been a distant remote dream on the part of organized labor for decades. This certainly had to be because they felt the moment near to abandon their factories and seek with concessions, *in articulo mortis*, to prolong their agony." Olivetti argued that Italian industrialists had instead placed themselves in the international vanguard: "Italy, a country without combustibles and raw materials, a country industrially young and hardly strong, has set an example with these reforms which still today are not as extensively and thoroughly applied in the United States, England, France or even Germany." Not only were these reforms "daring," but Olivetti moreover suggested that they signified a concrete programmatic convergence between the organizational forces of labor and capital.

The ideological duel between Olivetti and Gramsci had begun, Olivetti from the outset perceived factory councils as institutions which had to be combatted at all costs: on the one hand, they threatened to undermine the progressive institutionalization of class conflict by competing with labor syndicates for the primary allegiance of the rank and file; on the other, they impeded the orderly development of the productive process by challenging ever more strongly the essential hierarchical factory structure over which managerial authority had to be absolute.

Rather than deal with the factory council as an "abstraction" (which he accused *Ordine Nuovo* of doing)—a prefigurative and transformative structure which might ease the transition to socialism—Olivetti, with characteristic empiricism, set out to conduct a comparative case study as to how factory councils in Germany and Russia *actually functioned*, and to what degree they had, in fact, replaced unitary factory hierarchy with workers' self-management. Here, indeed, Olivetti would attack Gramsci's conception at its weakest point; that is, by demonstrating in both cases that factory councils had little more effective authority—and in Russia *a good deal less*—than the Italian form of the *commissione interna*, and that in both cases managerial authority over the actual productive process was unitary and absolute.

Of the two cases, that of Russia had far greater ideological bearing, for it in the homeland of communism, the one existing Proletarian State, workers not only lacked self-government, but were subject to more intensive managerial

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command than in Italy, then all this talk of self-emancipation was pure myth, incapable of realization. In this regard, Olivetti would continually point to the "steps backward" in Russia, attacking thereby the theoretical adequacy of communism, in his view a "concezione orientale," outside the logic of western rationality. For those who today tire at the exemplary use of Russia to "disprove" the realization of a socialist society, a necessary qualification must be made with respect to Olivetti's argument, for Gramsci indeed did base his particular factory council conception upon what he took to be Bolshevik practice. In this regard, one would have to concede that Olivetti's illustrative use of Russia was fair game and not what we may recognize today as tawdry ideological hackwork.

For informed readers, the full litany of authoritanian-centralist Bolshevik abuses—making a mockery of the order envisioned in Lenin's *State and Revolution*—need not be repeated in detail. One might merely mention in passing the crushing of the left opposition within the party, by substituting from above appointed for elected representatives; the silencing of the "workers' opposition," whose program was ridiculed by Lenin as "syndicalist twaddle," though it had been based upon his very own anticipation of communist practice (*State and Revolution*); Trotsky's militarization of labor and sophistic argument that in a communist State autonomous workers' institutions were superfluous since such a State by definition rules in the proletariat's interest; and finally official lies concerning the Kronstadt uprising, "justifying" the ruthless suppression of any further left criticism of the regime.

As for the nature of factory hierarchy under Bolshevism, Lenin revealed himself no less a productivist than Olivetti: his uncritical appreciation of Taylorism and lack of concern for the subjective and political limitations implicit in the "scientific management of work" concept; his justification for "one-man rule" in the factories and use of *spetzy* (bourgeois experts), his explicit modelling of the emergent Soviet economy on planning concepts developed by the architects of Germany's war mobilization, Rathenau and Moellendorf, based upon rationalized industrial trusts.

Lenin's productivism was indeed contagious; the heroic stature of the Bolshevik leader had pernicious influence upon western Marxists who at least tentatively accepted its logic. In Germany, Karl Korsh, writing in the aftermath of the "socialist revolution" of November 1918, suggested that in the transitional stage between capitalism and a socialized economy, productivity must not be sacrificed—even if this meant increasing the salary and authority of the industrialist and "universalizing" the range of private interest until "worker capitalism" replaced "proprietary capitalism."[43] As for the necessity of hierarchy and discipline, Korsh explicitly cited Lenin on the "absolute necessity" for "subordination without objection of hundreds and thousands to a single will:" "Far from dreaming of a return to the simpler and natural forms of production typical of a saintly past, the more decisive

43. Karl Korsch, *Consigli di Fabbrica e Socializzazione* (Bari, 1970), pp. 34-35.

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representatives of modern socialism and communism are completely pervaded by the Marxist conviction that in the socialist epoch *large mechanized industry*, generated by development in the capitalist epoch, together with all its inevitable consequences, not only will be preserved but indeed extended and technically perfected... But the *inevitable* consequence of each great mechanized industry is the subordination and lack of liberty; even on this point, in direct contrast with the 'anarcho-syndicalists,' the proponents of modern socialism make themselves irrevocably clear. Every great mechanized industry is organized work, and organized work signifies the continuous subordination of all the participants to the unitary will of the direction. The most authoritative spokesman for bolshevism never tires of emphasizing that 'for the success of work processes organized on the model of great mechanized industry, the *subordination without objection* of hundreds and thousands to a single will is absolutely necessary. Even in 'industrial democracy' fully realized in the socialist epoch, one ought to apply, rather apply more firmly, the following principle: during work the mass of workers ought to be passively subordinated to he who directs the process of production."[44]

Had the "capitalist" Gino Olivetti ever put the matter so boldly? At roughly the same time; that is, 1918, Olivetti observed: "Now we are convinced that industrialists and workers fulfill two diverse functions in the field of production: that is, the directive function for the former, the executing function of the latter. It is that way in the very nature of things: even in Russia where the new regime appeared in the first moment willing to sweep away every trace of the industrialists, today the government looks to them, beckoning them to resume their functions and reorganize production."[45]

Gramsci, who on the basis of his council writings should have been critical of Bolshevik deviations from the *autogoverno delle masse operaie*, raised no objection to the 1921 drift in Russian practice, though this fundamentally contradicted his theoretical point of departure, as well as the practice he himself had so eloquently advocated. Rather, Gramsci publicly commended Russian leadership for its prudence in limiting the power of the soviets,[46] and uncritically defended the soviet regime's Kronstadt repression (maintaining the uprising had been provoked by the forces of "international reaction").[47]

To return to Olivetti's critique of factory councils, the general-secretary of Confindustria presented his detailed comparative study to the delegate council on March 7, 1920, to be published shortly thereafter in various industrial publications. Commenting on factory councils in Russia and Germany, Olivetti noted: "Both these systems thus have not misunderstood that which is the prime necessity of any productive system, and that is the unity of command or direction so that there may exist in the firm a continuity of planning and quickness of decision which can only come from he who has

44. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
45. *BLI*, XII:1 (January, 1918).
46. Gramsci, *L'Ordine Nuovo, 1921-22, op.cit.*, p. 100.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-101, 109.

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complete understanding of all the various aspects of productive organization, without which no economic regime—no matter to whom belongs the profits and to whom goes the benefits—would be able to exist. It is not possible to misunderstand this necessity; it is not possible—without throwing the firm into disorder—to establish two powers within it, opposed to one another in such a manner as to break the unity necessary for direction. And for that reason, faced with the Russian and German systems, one might welcome one or the other on the basis of communist or anti-communist political convictions, but one would not adopt any intermediate solutions which divide the factory nor the tasks but rather that authority to direct between diverse sources of power."

With specific regard to Gramsci's writings, Olivetti dealt with the consequences that factory councils would have upon syndical practice: "If one examines the Italian conceptions put forth in this regard, the councils are organs antithetical to syndical organizations. They are only elective expressions of the majority of workers in one factory, mandated by them, revocable at any moment, such that they could not represent before the industrialists and their organizations a body with which one could, as with labor organizations, come to agreements having even relative generality and continuity. The members of the factory councils would not represent an entity distinct from the workers of each single factory, but only these workers, and are only the expression of the always changeable will of the mass at any given moment. If the mass changes its will and changes the members of the council, no organ would exist which might intervene to have respected agreements previously reached with the Council. Thus, a state would be reached where labor accords would be rather difficult, while in fact today they take place between industrialist and labor syndicates; that is, two organs which assume obligations, even if only relatively; compliance. . . with factory councils would render this impossible."[48]

The delegate council of Confindustria then adopted a resolution proposed by Olivetti to actively resist factory councils by rigorously enforcing existing labor contracts so that the *commissioni interne* would be kept within the bounds of their assigned functions. Though Olivetti cautioned that "resistance ought not be reaction," that no provocative action be taken on the part of the industrialists, he was clearly awaiting the most favorable conditions for a definitive showdown with the factory council proponents. Within a month's time the situation had ripened. How else could it be understood that a rather innocuous dispute in a Fiat factory over adjusting the clock to conform to daylight savings time would rapidly develop into a massive general strike including, at its peak, a half-million workers and affecting a regional population of four million? Ironic, indeed, is the fact that the Italian battle over workers' control would occur during the very same month that in Russia "one-man management" had formally been established, putting a definitive end to workers' control in the "State of the Councils."

48. *L'Italia Industriale*, II:2 (April, 1920).

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Who was to control production? To both sides, this was the central issue. According to Gramsci: "The April Torinese movement was in fact a magnificent event not only in the history of the Italian proletariat, but that of all Europe, and, some may say, of the world. For the first time in history, there was a case in which a proletariat undertook a struggle for the control of production without having been impelled into action by hunger or unemployment. What is more, it was not only a minority, a vanguard of the working class, but the entire mass of Torinese workers who descended into battle, incurring privations and sacrifices till the very end."[49]

Yet Gramsci admitted that "the Torinese working class was dragged into the battle, it did not have the freedom of choice." It was the *padroni* who took the initiative; the industrialists, who had been waiting and preparing for such an incident to present itself, seized upon the opportunity to destroy the movement which was both undercutting managerial authority and blocking further development of institutionalized syndical practice. "The purpose of the battle," said Agnelli, "is to resolve the question of the *commissioni interne*. And for that reason, the industrialists will either succeed in containing them in their proper functions, or must renounce their very autonomy."[50] In the words of Olivette: "In substance, it was the objective of the industrialists to precisely establish that *during the working hours one works and does not discuss, and that in the factory directive authority can only be unitary*. That necessarily led to depriving factory councils of all authority and to the resumption of technically-disciplined hierarchy, an imperative of production. At the same time, these affirmations of the industrialists were not directed against workers' syndicates, which rather had everything to gain from the elimination of these new extremist organisms, counterposed to them no less than to the industrialists, but rather against the attempt to install in larva-form a socio-political soviet regime."[51]

The details of the strike can not be dealt with here, other than to note that the incident in question centered on a *commissione interna's* decision to autonomously change Fiat's clock-hands so that they would not conform to daylight-savings time, a recently-enacted government decision which workers interpreted as a throwback to the war mobilization, when daylight savings was last instituted. Due to their inexperience or incompetence, the Fiat factory councils eventually called upon the head of FIOM, Bruno Buozzi, to represent them in negotiations with the industrialists. Buozzi was unsuccessful in getting the Fiat workers' approval for an agreement he had negotiated and the Fiat strike soon generated into a regional general strike. Though the Torinese general strike was the most notable incident of labor solidarity yet experienced in Italy, its fate was sealed when the CGL and the Socialist Party refused to extend it to the national level. Both organizations had grown hostile to the *Ordinovisti* and their program under which councils were

49. Gramsci, *L'Ordine Nuovo, 1919-20, op.cit.*, p. 177.
50. Castronovo, *Giovanni Agnelli, op.cit.*, p. 226.
51. *L'Italia Industriale*, II:5 (May, 1920).

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autonomous from syndicate and party. As Gramsci bitterly commented: "The Torinese proletariat was isolated from the rest of Italy; the central organs would do nothing to help it; not even publish a manifesto to explain to the Italian people the importance of the Torinese workers' struggle—*Avanti!* refused to publish the manifesto of the Torinese section of the party. The Torinese comrades caught from everywhere epithets like 'anarchists' and 'adventurers.' At the time, there was supposed to be held in Torino a meeting of the Party's national council; this meeting, however, was transferred to Milano, a city overwhelmed by a general strike' seemed ill-fit as a theater for socialist discussions."[52]

Buozzi, speaking at the FIOM national conference on May 23rd, criticized the *Ordinovisti* and called for syndical discipline. So impressed were the industrialists by Buozzi's comments, that they reproduced his speech *verbatim* in *L'Informazione Industriale*: "We are all in agreement with regard to the constitution of factory councils, but they must be constituted so as to be able to function in a bourgeois regime. Expropriate? Raise a red flag above a factory? Strike for the conquest of factory control? And then? We have seen what a pitiful end certain experiments have had. The time has come to find our bearings and re-enter reality. In Torino the industrialists wanted a battle not against factory councils in and of themselves, but rather against abuses they generated, because they understood that workers wanted to attribute functions to them irreconcilable with the regime in which we live, and they won while we have been turned backward...Factory councils, okay, but disciplined by the Federation; without discipline no good can be done..."[53]

With the end of the April general strike, the issue of factory councils was definitively settled, although they would briefly reemerge again isolated in Torino during the factory occupations of September 1920. Aside from the larger question as to whether factory councils as conceived by Gramsci were practically feasible, the strategic failure of the *Ordinovisti* was due to two factors: (1) faulty analysis concerning the industrial bourgeoisie's competence and internal cohesiveness; (2) failure to extend the council movement beyond Torino, as well as making it the directing force of Italian socialism. As for the latter, Gramsci later noted after fascism had come to power that: "Essentially we are not paying for the serious errors we made in 1919-20. For fear of being thought power hungry careerists, we did not try to create a definite faction that could be organized throughout Italy. We did not want to give the Torino factory councils an autonomous directing group that might have greatly influenced the whole country because we were afraid of a split in the unions and a premature expulsion from the Socialist party."[54]

A further criticism may be made. So extreme had Gramsci's critique been of the syndicates, that the *ordinovisti* never encouraged factory councils to duplicate such reformist concerns as salaries, full employment, the work-day,

52. Gramsci, *L'Ordine Nuovo, 1919-20, op.cit.*, p. 180.
53. *L'Informazione Industriale*, I:15 (June 3, 1920).
54. John Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (Stanford, 1967), p. 108.

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etc. Thus, when the 1919-20 revolutionary tide had ebbed, the councils appeared to have lost their purpose, as they were concerned only with offensive, not defensive action, with fomenting revolution but not preventing reaction. During the third quarter of 1920, the Italian economy went into an extreme depression which the industrialists exploited, using the threat of lay-offs, to retract earlier concessions and to impose greater discipline. In such a defensive situation, syndicates rather than factory councils were more likely to be effective, yet due partially to the council movement—as well as their own organic weakness, to be sure—syndicates lost their mass base and became objects of universal ridicule. In the absence of councils or syndicates, the Italian proletariat was left divided and demoralized, incapable of holding their own, much less stemming the tide of reaction which led to fascism.

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# THE IDEOLOGY OF LABOR AND CAPITALIST RATIONALITY IN GRAMSCI*

by Enzo Rutigliano

Gramsci's relations to Croce are well known—especially in the *Prison Notebooks*, where he criticizes the concepts of "science" and "objectivity" by means of an absolute historicism implicit in his "philosophy of praxis." This vision of history as a continuum not only pertains to the Gramsci of the *Notebooks*, where he develops the concepts of *historical bloc* and *hegemony* (presupposing the growth of the working class within bourgeois society), but also to the Gramsci of the *Ordine Nuovo* years expressed in the continuum betwen the production process, factory councils, political hegemony, economic power, and political power.

In short, from a political viewpoint, the entire problem of the councils in Gramsci consists of constructing an organ *within* the system meant to function *against* that system. At first, this new organ covers only a few islands. Later, however, it gradually grows until it covers the entire production system. Then the capitalist's economic function as well as his consequent politiccal influence become superfluous. At this point, the revolution is no longer bloody, uncertain, or dependent on the consciousness of the participating masses. Instead, the entire political weight has by now shifted to the proletariat as the councils' power within factories is swiftly enlarged. Thus, the revolution can occur without a revolution. The council becomes the instrument of internal growth within the factory and, more generally, within capitalist production. In the evolution of the proletariat from an *instrument of production* to a manager of relations of production, the council is an already given and foreseeable *form* in the analysis of this very evolution, and not a class *invention* for abolishing the limits and divisions imposed by its character as labor-force within the production process.

Nevertheless, this way of understanding the council's function in Gramsci, far from being the result of one thinker's isolated elaboration, can be ascribed to a particular stage of the labor movement's struggle against the *formal* domination of capital. Moreover, this domination is characterized by the fact that the nature of labor is still artisanal and skilled. This generates in the proletariat a producer consciousness which leads him to struggle against the owner of the means of production, who takes from him what he has produced. In fact, at this stage of production, the capitalist's role seems merely parasitic, since in the production process he appears merely as the owner. Moreover, the production process itself (the acquisition of raw materials, the selling of products and production itself) appears relatively simple, at least to the extent that the producer's taking over the entire

*English translation by William Boelhower.

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production process does not present any technical or economic difficulties.

Gramsci's thought is the direct expression of this stage of the production process. His analysis of the possibility of the substitution of the capitalist owner by the associated producers without problems arising for the entire functioning of production is justified both by his analysis of the incompetence of the capitalists addicted "to the abject instinct of debauchery" and by the social responsibility of the collective proletariat as producer. Thus, the factory council seeking to manage production is a "representative institution which is developed not arithmetically but morphologically," in the sense that it is through the "morphological" form that the contents of the workers' struggle are expressed at this production stage. All of this, of course, is also consistent with what Marx says is the nature of the antagonism between capital and labor during the epoch of the formal domination of capital in society: "But the antithesis between capital and labor is overcome within them (cooperative factories), if at first only by way of making the associated laborers into their own capitalists, i.e., by enabling them to use the means of production for the employment of their own labor."[1]

The central point of Marx's analysis is that he ties this relative overcoming of the antagonism between capital and labor to a determinate stage of the development of the production forces: in the epoch of the formal domination of capital. Gramsci, on the other hand, de-historicizes this particular stage of production to the point of making it coincide with communism: "the workers' Factory Council is the first step in a historical process that should lead eventually to the Communist International, no longer as a political organization of the revolutionary proletariat, but as a reorganization of the world economy and of the whole human community, on a national as well as on a world level."[2]

Gramsci singles out two major means for this "worldwide reorganization of the economy": 1) "the collaboration between manual workers, skilled workers, administrative employees, engineers and technical directors;"[3] and 2) the rationality of industrial technology "which in turn is independent in a certain sense of the mode of appropriation of the values that are produced."[4] In a similar context, Marx writes: "The principle of large industry to resolve each production process into its constitutive elements, considered in and by itself and without in the least taking into account the human hand, has created the very modern science of technology," which, however, "reproduces the old division of labor with its ossified particularities, but in *its capitalist form*." It is also thanks to this technology that "by means of its conversion into an automaton, the instrument of labor confronts the laborer, during the labor-process, in the shape of *capital*, of dead labor, that dominates, and pumps dry, living labor-power. The separation of the intellectual *powers* of

1. Karl Marx, *Capital* (New York, 1967), vol. III, part 5, chapter 27, p. 440.
2. Antonio Gramsci, "The Factory Council," *Selections from Political Writings, 1910-1920*, ed. Quintin Hoare (London, 1977), p. 264.
3. Antonio Gramsci, "Syndicalism and the Councils," *ibid.*, p. 110.
4. Antonio Gramsci, "On the L'Ordine Nuovo Program," *ibid.*, p. 295.

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production from the manual labor, and the conversion of those powers into the might of *capital over labor*, is, as we have already shown, finally completed by modern industry erected on the foundation of machinery. The special skill of each individual insignificant factory operative vanishes as an infinitesimal quantity before the science, the gigantic physical forces, and the mass of labor that are embodied in the factory mechanism and, together with that mechanism, constitute the power of the 'master'...in whose brain the machinery and *his monopoly* of it are inseparably united."[5]

In his article "The Worker in the Factory," which appeared in *Ordine Nuovo*, February 21, 1919, Gramsci claims that the bourgeoisie is no longer able to guarantee capitalist development and the equilibrium between production and consumption because it has moved away from labor by delegating "its combative and conquering function to a band of adventurers and mercenary politicians who only pursue the abject instincts of debauchery." Still in the same article: "The traditional functions of the capitalist class in the field of production have passed into the hands of an irresponsible middle class, without either psychological bonds or common interests with production itself." These are bonds (evidently of a moral nature), which, according to Gramsci—and Sorel before him—are possible between the proletariat and the factory in a closed model of ideal rationality to be transmitted to all of society. In the factory entrusted to his own control, the worker acquires "a conscious and voluntary discipline," and "the psychology of the producer: of the maker of history." For both Gramsci and Sorel, it is not so much the capitalist organization of work that is questioned, but its direction. Therefore, it is not a matter of the relations of capitalist production, but of the management of these relations. For Gramsci and Sorel, the proletariat will have to become the subject of the management of the relations of capitalist production rather than, as for Marx, the subject of their destruction. In the final analysis, it will have to become the subject of its own exploitation, through identification with the factory and its morality.

For Gramsci, the morality of the factory is a result of its profound rationality—a rationality which, in order to be so (i.e., in order to function rationally) must eliminate conflict within itself and re-establish "the collaboration of unskilled, skilled, white collar workers, engineers, and technicians by getting rid of private property which has become a dead weight, an encumbrance to be eliminated."[6]

It seems that Gramsci's major preoccupation is to abolish the disintegrating tendencies of the capitalist production system embodied in the dissipating unproductive middle classes by eliminating them from the direction of industrial power in the factory and by substituting them with the working class, which becomes "a determinate instrument of production with a determinate organic constitution" and is constituted as the "cell of a new representative system of councils." In the historicist evolution, the elimination

5. Karl Marx, *Capital., op.cit.*, vol. I, part 4, chapter 15, pp. 422-423.
6. Antonio Gramsci, "The Factory Council," *Ordine Nuovo*, 5, vi, 1920.

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of every dialectical contrast is too evident in Gramsci to be denied or attributed to some outside influence. It is present in all of Gramsci's work and is concretized in the function that he attributes to the factory council seen as the natural and almost necessary result of the production process. It remains the basis of communist society which, through the council—understood as the means whereby management passes from the hands of the capitalist to those of the workers—grows within bourgeois society without disturbance. The passage from the old to the "new order" comes about by safeguarding the continuity of the relations of capitalist production and the resulting rationality and despotism on the one hand, and alienation and exploitation on the other. All of this is possible because of another uncritical assumption: the neutrality of science and technology as product and producers of capitalist rationality. And here is the *trait d'union* with the liberal Gobetti, who already anticipated the safeguarding of the relations of production. They are the first intuitions of the real domination of capital over all of society. This domination displaces the contradiction between capital and labor by leaving its management to labor, i.e., by letting the workers manage their own exploitation. Here is Gobetti's proposal: "today the workers will have to be more vigorously bourgeois (as producers) since the industrialists no longer know how to fulfill their function as savers and initiators."[7] The function of entrepreneurs and managers of the relations of capitalist production will have to be taken over by labor, by the workers who, according to Gobetti, "will not establish communism, but only a regime of discipline for labor within the factory (a discipline which the capitalists can no longer sustain)." Capital becomes labor's defender and declares itself in favor of managerialism. A few days before the formation of the political action groups [*fasci di combattimento*], Mussolini went to visit the Franchi-Gregorini works of Dalmine, where around 2,000 steelworkers had occupied the factory (hoisting the Italian flag over it), by putting into practice the so-called "creative strike" and by guaranteeing production after having routed the owners. Mussolini then wrote in his newspaper *Popolo d'Italia*: "the formation of the workers' council, which for three days has provided for the direction of the factory by assuring its functioning...represents the honest attempt, the dedicated effort, the worthy ambition to succeed the self-proclaimed bourgeois class in the management of labor." Later he added: "The occupation of Dalmine is proof of the proletariat's ability to directly manage the factory." Gobetti's thesis sought to realize in Italy the highest level of capitalist development by inserting the proletariat into society as one of the forces of development recognized as such. At the same time, however, the proletariat was eliminated as an antagonistic class, thus eliminating the dysfunction between capital and labor. This recognition of the proletariat's "national" value, understood by Gobetti from a neo-capitalistic perspective, is also at the center of Gramsci's analyses, especially after 1924, when he assigns to the proletariat the "national function" to weld the alliance between the

7. Piero Gobetti, *La rivoluzione liberale* (Turin, 1966).

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workers of the North and the poor farmers of the South in what he calls a "national class." Needless to say, this perspective leads to a correspondence of class objectives with "national" or "popular" objectives.[8]

In "Americanism and Fordism," the same Gramsci would quote an article by Massimo Fovel in which the latter "conceives of 'corporatism' as the premise for the introduction into Italy of the most advanced American systems of production and labour. It would be interesting to know whether Fovel is writing . . . with specific social forces . . . which back him and urge him on."[9]

This coincidence of class objectives with "the Nation's superior interest" is also at the center of the analyses of national socialism first, and of left interventionism later. It finds its systematization in De Ambris' and D'Annunzio's "Carta del Carnaro" and is at the center of the founding congress of the *Fasci* (especially in Rossoni's and Ciardi's speeches). It is actually what Fascism sought to do with the corporations, i.e., the integration of the labor force into the State structure. This last claim is corroborated by the observation that Fascism has never had control of the means of production.

Now, all of these coincidences, these superimpositions of analyses, this common ground among apparently and actually opposing ideologies, this *common ideology on labor*, can only be partly explained by a "common cultural climate." There is an objective determined by capital's historical needs. Gramsci himself, in the already quoted 1929 work on "Americanism and Fordism," which seems to be a self-criticism of his writings in *Ordine Nuovo*, realized the non-"autonomous" function of the Italian working class during this period, when he claimed that: "A careful analysis of Italian history before 1922 and even up to 1926, which does not allow itself to be detracted by external trappings but manages to seize the essential moments of the working-class struggle, must objectively come to the conclusion that it was precisely the workers who brought into being newer and more modern industrial requirements and in their own way upheld these more strenuously. It could also be said that some industrialists understood this movement and tried to appropriate it to themselves. This explains Agnelli's attempt to absorb the *Ordine Nuovo* and its school into the FIAT complex and thus to institute a school for workers and technicians qualified for industrial change and for work with 'rationalized' systems."[10] The historical need of capital from 1914 to 1945 was to integrate the labor-force into the capitalist State, as productive labor, through the "capitalization of the worker," by instilling in him a consciousness of himself as a producer, but also as capital which must bear fruit. At the same time, there is the phenomenon of the "anthropomorphizing of capital," i.e., capital tends to become "natural" and "organic" with man's needs: "In the process of capitalist production an ever larger class of workers is formed, workers who, thanks to education, tradition, and habit,

8. Cf. Robert Paris, *Le origini del Fascismo* (Milan, 1971).

9. Antonio Gramsci, "Americanism and Fordism," in *Prison Notebooks*, trans. and ed. by Quintin Hoare and Goeffrey Nowell Smith (London, 1971), p. 289.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

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undergo the requirements of capital as spontaneously as the change of seasons. The organization of the process of advanced capitalist production breaks every resistance. The constant production of a relative overpopulation keeps up the law of supply and demand with respect to work, and therefore, the worker's salary, on a track corresponding to the needs of capital. The silent co-action of the economic relations fixes its seal on the capitalist's domination over the worker."

Through this further generalization, capital in its phenomenal forms tends to negate itself as capital, by realizing itself (the passage to real domination), changes in order to grow by becoming, as previously mentioned, the defender of his former antagonist, labor.

At this point the circle seems to close and the defense of the worker becomes the defense of capital. "It is due to Fascism that Capital has attained real domination, when it dominates under the aspect of labor. Fascism was the necessary moment in the destruction of the strength of the proletariat as the possibility of negation and of bringing about the triumph of productive labor as the subject of capital's life project."[11]

Gramsci himself had perceived this function (at least as a tendency within Fascism) when he wrote: "The corporative movement exists. It is also true that in some ways the juridical changes which have already taken place have created the formal conditions within which major technical-economic change can happen on a large scale, because the workers are not in a position either to oppose it or to struggle to become themselves the standard-bearer of the movement. Corporative organization could become the form of the new change, but one asks oneself: shall we experience one of Vico's 'ruses of providence' in which men, without either proposing or willing it, are forced to obey the imperatives of history?"[12]

The drama of the labor movement, defeated in the 1920s, is all here: the struggle of "labor" *within* capital, the impossibility of opposing capital's project of dominion already in process, was necessarily the cause and effect of the defeat. It is a cause, inasmuch as the main reason for the defeat of Europe's proletariat was due to its opposition to the general project of capitalist rationalization rather than the movement's reorganization on new grounds. By defeat is meant not only the military defeat of the November Revolution in Germany, but also the inability of the official labor movement (e.g., the Third International) to understand capital's project of global rationalization and then its inability to understand that the fulcrum of the political struggle becomes the new mass-worker.

Gramsci seems to have reached a certain understanding of the problem: at least to the point of having foreseen the disappearance of the professional worker and the life-style which he represented. With regard to the goals of American society he says that they are to develop "in the worker to the highest degree automatic and mechanical attitudes, breaking up the old psycho-

11. Gianni Collu, "Transizione," *Apocalisse e Rivoluzione* (Bari, 1973).
12. Gramsci, "Americanism and Fordism," *op.cit.*, p. 293.

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physical nexus of qualified professional work, which demands a certain active participation of intelligence, fantasy and initiative on the part of the worker and reducing productive operations exclusively to the mechanical, physical aspect. But these things in reality are not original or novel: they represent simply the most recent phase of a long process which began with industrialism itself. This phase is only more intense than preceding phases, and manifests itself in more brutal forms, but it is a phase which will itself be superseded... A forced selection will ineluctably take place; a part of the old working class will be pitilessly eliminated from the world of labor and perhaps from the world *tout court*."[13] It is now a matter of seeing how the development of capitalist consciousness finds different means on the level of State intervention, to enter this transitional phase leading to the real domination of capital. On the level of class composition, this phase sees the rapid decline of the highly skilled worker and the emergence of the new mass-worker, while on the level of the organization of capital, i.e., the State, it sees its recomposition under the form of new production techniques and the rise of new cooperativist ideologies (e.g., corporatism and the New Deal). In general, in order to change its model following the 1917 breach and to meet the world-wide revolutionary surge of the labor movement, capital seems to find recourse in the repressive use of force and in the reabsorption of the labor-force by means of a technological leap. This results in the sociological recomposition of the labor movement through the new assembly-line worker, by crushing the old skilled worker.

These two proposals of capital are obviously not carried out with the same means but are chosen according to the specific class situation in various countries and according to the relative traditions. Thus, the New Deal is the ideology of cooperation assumed by American capitalism and corporatism is the method of cooperation imposed on the working class by the Italian and German states. Both of these ideologies (and this is the point which we are interested in analyzing) in order to be the ideologies of cooperation between capital and labor, must find the connecting point in the ideological patrimony of the working class itself.

Already in 1922, in *Labor Legislation for Factory Councils,* Korsch wrote: "All of this recognition of the coalition principle, obtained thanks to the ever increasing strength of workers organizations, are now surpassed by a new phenomenon, the beginnings of which are already partly located in the past, but whose specific relevance is of particular interest for the present and future. The 'freedom to organize,' won by proletarian organizations in the past and enjoyed presently, shows the tendency to develop into a formal 'compulsion to organize.' " Korsch realized that capital's tendency to organize is also opposed to its earlier tendencies, i.e., demanding economic freedom on all levels, and can only be the result of the new needs of a new phase of capitalism. This phase has as a distinctive sign the generalized tendency to introduce collective bargaining both in Fascist as well as in "socialist" and

13. Gramsci, "Americanism and Fordism," *op.cit.*, pp. 302-303.

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democratic States. The myth of the *politically* emancipating pluralist State is substituted by the myth of the *economically* emancipating social State. Capital tends to become autonomous from politics. Some years later Korsch perceptively observed that there was an enormous difference between the Marxist thrust towards class collaboration and capital's "obligation to organize" which uses organization *against* the working class "predominantly as a means for the more effective maintenance of dominance over the working class." Yet, he saw a double aspect in this attempt, i.e., that subsequently this coercive aspect of capital can *also* turn into a weapon in the hands of the working class.

In a later writing in 1928,[14] Korsch remarks how the tendencies that he singled out six years earlier have been consolidated in a counter-revolutionary sense and have been used not as working-class conquests, but rather have strengthened its servitude by serving capital extremely well in bringing to completion the transition to its new phase. Korsch analyzes the situation of Fascism in Italy through the 1926 laws concerning the regime's labor unions, as the representatives of the country's whole working class, in a way not unlike (with the enormous differences emphasized by Korsch) the forced inscription of the Russian workers into recognized labor unions: "As in Fascist Italy, so in Bolshevist Russia the transition from the freedom to organize to the more elevated principle in the idea of the obligation to organize is finally deformed in actual practice into its exact opposite. Instead of a more advanced development from the pre-revolutionary freedom to organize to the revolutionary requirement to do so as an integral part of the dictatorship of the proletariat, one finally reaches a greater servitude of the workers, with the simple defrauding of the freedom to organize. The trade unions have degenerated from organizations for the proletarian class struggle to elements in the apparatus of State repression against the workers."[15] Now, the revolution is only possible if class organization is a step ahead of the organization of capital, i.e., if the general project of the proletariat (the communist program) precedes capital's project. For this to happen it is necessary that the labor movement not only possess a project independent of that of capital, but one which tends to outstrip it. What is needed for this purpose is the complete awareness of the historical moment and, first of all, transformations in the organization of work. With a few rare exceptions, almost all of the labor movement sought to defensively oppose the capitalist re-organization of work. Its political action was based on the old figure of the professional worker for whom the struggle was wholly aimed at the defense of his own professionalism, challenged on the one hand by the worldwide reorganization of capital, and on the other (but as a consequence: and it is for this reason that capitalist organization determines the organization of the labor movement in a non-revolutionary period) by the mass worker who was already

14. Karl Korsch, "Sul Diritto di Contrattazione delle Unioni Sindacali Rivoluzionarie," *Scritti Politici*, ed. Gian Enrico Rusconi (Bari, 1975), vol. 1, pp. 201ff.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209.

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visible in the unskilled and unemployed laborer marginal to production, but also as the main figure in the AAU and the KAPD.[16] It is also in terms of this different social base that the divergent political line between the KPD and the KAPD in Germany during the 1920s is to be understood. The political victory of the revolution in Germany and Europe would have evidently directed in a different way the worldwide reorganization of the economy within which the remaining capitalist countries would have been forced to undergo the rhythm of development of a socialist Europe, instead of compelling the Soviet Union to rapid accumulation which, as "socialism in one country," was forced to cooperate in the reorganization of world capital.

16. Cf. Sergio Bologna, "Class Composition and the Theory of the Party at the Origins of the Workers-Council Movement," *Telos*, 13 (Fall 1972), pp. 4-27; and Enzo Rutigliano, *Linkskommunismus e Rivoluzione in Occidente* (Bari, 1954).

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# GRAMSCI AS AN HISTORIAN OF THE 1930S*

## by Attilio Baldan

To define Gramsci as an historian is problematic for every Marxist student, and especially for Gramsci, who saw himself in conscious opposition to academic trivia. His orthodox role within Western Marxism constantly accompanies Gramsci the philosopher. This allowed him to avoid those dangerous relapses into Kantianism and those mixtures with intuitionist theories in the anti-Stalinist cultural struggle of many "radical" communists intellectually close to him. Thus, it would be a mistake to "cut out" of the *Notebooks* a specifically historiographic part in contradistinction to other Gramscian philosophical, literary or economic interests. It would be wrong to collect into a separate "history" volume all of the material in *Past and Present*, half of *The Risorgimento*, and a third of *Historical Materialism and the Philosophy of Benedetto Croce*, following the criteria established by Togliatti and Platone. The fact is that in all 32 notebooks that Gramsci's sister-in-law received from prison officials after his death, "historiographic" fragments are intermixed with other "literary" or "economic" ones in a general project dealing with the history of Italian intellectuals.

Yet, this is not the way in which modern criticism is becoming aware of the problems and of the errors of 20 years fostered by the selection and subdivision in the original edition of the *Prison Notebooks*. What guides the present Gerratana or Paris revision is more of a "political" rather than a "scientific" undertaking. It has become clear that Gramsci's 2800 pages of manuscript were edited in a situation conditioned by the post-1945 shift of the PCI in favor of parliamentary participation. Thus, the emphasis was placed on alliances and on a gradually growing "hegemony." This is how the separate volume on *Machiavelli* was "created" by the editors. Since, furthermore, the Italian communist movement was presented as a descendent of national classical philosophy, another volume dealing with *Historical Materialism and the Philosophy of Benedetto Croce* was also "created." It is now claimed that what was meant to stress the Party's connection not only to the minoritarian "proletarian" culture, but also to that generally "popular" one, the "national" culture, and to establish a parallel between Marx's overturning of Hegel and Gramsci's overturning of absolute idealism—following Togliatti's interpretation of Gramsci. It was of little importance that Gramsci himself had attacked Croce's distortion of the Hegelian dialectic into a static and abstract epistemological moment. Above all, there was a need to downplay (without conceding the criticisms of "Western Marxism"),

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the barbaric features of the so-called "Bolshevism" during the "difficult years." It was an effort to turn the accusation against the ruling classes, by making Gramsci the censor of Lukácsian idealism, of Bordighian "invariance," of Trotskyist "permanent revolution."

As the spokesman of the national road to socialism and of the new post-war party of responsibility and maturity (even in regard to the Catholic question), Gramsci had to be presented according to subsequent interpretations. The obviously chronological structure of the *Prison Notebooks* restored by Gerratana and Paris has revealed a thinker divided between two epochs: between the *Ordine Nuovo* period and the patient resignation of the prison years. There are also practical questions. Except for rare occasions, the fact that Gramsci had to turn in a completed notebook whenever he wanted a new one prevented any kind of systematic work. Having projected an extremely broad research, as outlined in a letter to his sister-in-law Tatiana Schucht, dated May 23, 1927 (the well-known letter where he discusses the *für ewig*) or in subsequent formulations in 1929 or 1932, Gramsci could only pile up a series of notes dealing with previously discussed themes. In addition to this, there was the extreme precariousness of the sources. Only the new prison regulation of June 18, 1931, took away from the Director of the chaplain the power to restrict to four the number of volumes that prisoners could keep in their cells, and all of them previously "approved." This helps to explain why Gramsci's work follows only with difficulty the definitive plan laid out in March 1929.

Hence, the anticipated studies on 19th century Italy, on historiography and Fordism, remain in a formless state. This work began February 8, 1929, the date of the first *Notebook*, and ends early in 1935 with *Notebook XVI.*[1] Thanks to Carbone's research in 1952, we have the list of books and reviews consulted by Gramsci when drafting his notes. Thus, we learn that the prisoner had at his disposal almost twenty Marxian texts, although not those which came to light during the 1930s, 26 works by Croce, seven by Graziadei, four by Salvemini, four by Arturo Labriola, and then three by Rodolfo Mondolfo, three by Adolfo Omodeo, three by Antonio Labriola, three by Lenin (*What Is to Be Done?*, the speech about the NEP, and an anthology). He also had two editions of Kautsky's *Terrorism and Communism*, and a surprising "ultraleft" literature: Lafargue, Luxemburg, Frölich, Eisner, Gorter, etc.[2]

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1. There are six years, preceded and followed by two years of forced inactivity, which saw Gramsci write among the most important of his so-called *Notebooks*: IX, XIII, XVI, and XX (in 1929-30), VII (1930-31), XIV (1931-32), XXVIII (1932-33), I, II, IV, and XXII (1933), III, V, XVIII, and XXX (1933-34), XXVII (1934), and XXV (between 1933 and 1935). The sequential Roman numeration has no particular meaning: it was randomly assigned by Schucht. It is now useless and in need of correction in regard to dating on the basis of the manuscripts and letters. Certainly, 11 notebooks not stamped by prison authorities—III, V (which contains the transcripts of 1929-30 notes on Fordism), VI, X, XI, XII, XVII, XXXI, XXIII, XXV, and XXVII—belong to the final period after he was released from prison and sent to the clinic in Formia.

2. Also included in Gramsci's little library is Gentile and De Man, a 1924 work by Keynes against the gold standard, and Werner Sombart (not, however, his *Modern Capitalism*), Henry Sée

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On the other hand, it is not possible to follow Gramsci's theoretical development by referring only to his readings, since there is no chronological reference either from the warden (who didn't keep a record) of from the bookstore through which Gramsci ordered his books (Sperling and Küpfer of Milan, many of whose records were lost during the bombings of World War II).[3]

But the texts dealing with the past provide only one aspect of the conceptual picture which the prisoner was elaborating. The five dailies to which he subscribed—the *Corriere della Sera, La Stampa* (which had eliminated Giolitti's staff), the once radical *Secolo, Il Giornale d'Italia* (which one famous polemicist had called the "newspaper of Italy's idiots"), and Mussolini's *Popolo d'Italia*—provided each day news of the world of the 1930s.

Lastly, there was the secret mail, as described by Giancarlo Pajetta, made up of postcards with writing on secret inside compartments subsequently sealed, invisible ink, party votes drafted under the stamp, incoherent letters which only a perforated grid could make comprehensible, etc. Other connections could also have been the inquiries which his brother Gennaro made on behalf of his always vigilant "cousin," the visits of his foreign wife (not subject to passport policies) and the visits of a few friends. This is certainly an archive richer than that at the disposal of Henri Pirenne in a German concentration camp for Russian prisoners, or Marc Bloch, deprived of his library by the Nazis, in the *maquis*.[4]

When in 1933 Gramsci asks in *Notebook* I: "How is history to be studied?" after four years of reflection, he has reached a crucial problem of historiography. This has immediate consequences for another no less relevant problem—i.e., Marxist theory. The problem is this: on the one hand,

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and Mathiez, Salvatorelli and Barbagallo. There are, of course, some obscurities in Carbone's catalogue: The "French Volpe" and colleague of Renaudet, Henri Hauser, is confused with the art historian Arnold Hauser, books are missing which Gramsci reviewed in the *Notebooks* (among them Salvemini's *The French Revolution*, which was widely circulated among the prisoners) or which he had requested from his sister-in-law or Straffa—e.g., the previously mentioned book by Sombart.

3. What remains are the dates of publication of the books themselves: thus, *Queen Victoria* by Strachey, a friend of Keynes, could not have been read prior to 1930, the date of the Mondadori edition; and Stalin's discussion of the first five-year plan also had a definite date. In addition, there are ten full years of *La Nuova Rivista Storica* from 1928 to 1937. It was from its pages and from those of the *Nuova Antologia* that Gramsci received stimulus for his own project of a new history.

4. Athos Lisa, Lay and Trombetti have provided a description of all this—and Spriano has used this testimony to write chapters 14 and 19 of the second volume of the history of the Italian Communist Party. It is peculiar, in this regard, that the only Gramsci biography published with any pretensions to completeness is a work written by a socialist. There are far too many unknowns which Gramsci's judgments could raise for the PCI line. One can only hope that the guarded care with which Spriano synthesized those moments was derived from criteria of scientific honesty, that the manuscript, corroborated by information from his prison mates, was respected by the various editors, and above all, during the period of his stay in the Soviet Union. Sechi, in 1967, and Corvisieri, in 1970, have effectively called into question certain passages (or omissions), respectively the anti-Bordighian ones in *The Letters* and the anti-Trotskyite ones in *The Notebooks*. Cf. Salvatore Sechi, "Spunti Critici sulle *Lettere del Carcere* di Gramsci," *Quaderni Piacentini*, 29 (1967); and Silverio Corvisieri, *Trotsky e il Comunismo Italiano* (Rome, 1970), chapter III.

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experience tells us that almost always the importance of an event—e.g., the discovery of America or the invention of the printing press—reveals itself after its appearance; on the other hand, Marxism presupposes a model of cause and effect between human events. How can a Marxist historian, Gramsci asks, deal with the second criterion on the basis of observations which almost always turn out to be Eurocentric, provincial and ultimately no less risky than those which bourgeois colleagues could adduce? The reply must be that history can be studied only as a mediation—which seems to absolve Slutsky, ill-treated by Stalin as a self-appointed critic of "dusty old papers" and as the so-called historian of the Bolshevik Russian Communist Party. Only political life and the "tension to answer" to concrete problems can unify what has really occurred and what we are able to grasp. Marxism, as "philosophy of praxis," is not a simple "canon of historical research," but a general anthropology which differs from "historical economism" and from any other merely "historical" theory insofar as it seeks an explanation of the profound historical process of which the historian is an integral part. This position re-emerges in *Notebooks* IV, also written in 1933. What the Marxist historian confronts is not a stable reality that the various methods attempt to grasp, but a circular ideological process.

This is also the period during which Gramsci wrote *Notebook* III dealing with Croce as an ideologue. In these writings, which are perhaps Gramsci's most mature and without doubt the most complete, philosophy as seen through the history of philosophy ends up as an ideological composition variously expressed according to the hierarchical criteria laid out by dominant groups. It becomes history once it turns into a "norm of collective action." It follows from this that the relations between philosophy and history can be part of a theory of collective consciousness which is neither idealist nor monist. These arguments resemble those in Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* and Croce's work which, after Gramsci's death, culminated in *History as Thought and Action*. These are the points which ever since Bernstein have demarcated battle lines between historical materialism and ideologies foreign to it. Yet, Gramsci's position is not reducible to Croce's or to that of the young Lukács. The "block" which he postulated between thought and action is far more concrete than even similar accounts which Lucien Febvre was formulating during those same years.[5]

Already in 1930-31, the date of *Notebook* VII, Gramsci dealt with Marxian historiography and outlined three "real precautions" for Marxist historians. In the first place, considering that the study of a given base is only possible after its complete establishment, every premature attempt (e.g., all

5. Directly related to this is the subsequent position dealing with the so-called "anti-history," i.e., the real utopia vindicated by political oppositions. "Anti-history" is admitted or denied on the basis of relations between events and the process whereby thought becomes "concrete action." Hence, there is no basis for the condemnation of extremist "intransigence" (*dover essere*). This was never Gramsci's intent, but rather the creation of the editor of the *Notebooks* through the addition to the text in question of a note from *Notebook* XX, written in 1929-30 and dealing with a review by Missiroli of Tilgher's work.

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formulations of contemporary history) should be considered purely as hypotheses. Moreover, since there are concrete margins of "error" for the dominant classes, Marxist historians should not invariably consider every action as immediately related to the "plan of capital" and to the laws of the system. Finally, according to Gramsci, the materialist scholar should avoid relating to a total framework problems whose solutions can be found within specific situations. There are organizational practices not explainable through the totality of social relations but rather by means of observations of an internal, logical nature. Gramsci gave the example of the religious positions of Byzantium and Rome which, arising from internal needs for social reconstruction, later became reasons for extranational conflict.

Some have sought to discover in Gramsci a system in conflict with the "philosophical" nature of his formulations: a sort of ready-made sociology whose practical level negates the theoretical one constituted by the forced Crocean historiography. The contradiction is unfounded. The organization in stages—six to be exact (but only according to the author's intentions)—of the historical appearance of subaltern classes, comprises, within the logic of *Notebook* XXIII, a political sociology of history profoundly anchored in Gramsci's Marxist philosophical conceptions. Those familiar with the terminology of contemporary political science can easily trace back Gramsci's analytical plan to the relation between "modernization," "innovation" and "intgration" elaborated during the last 20 years by American sociologists of "take-off" and "feed-back." But Gramsci's interpretative system is certainly different, insofar as there is no place in it for theoretical hybrids such as the so-called "modernizing elites." Gramsci wanted to study the objective development of minority groups, their ties to the "hegemonic" classes, the parties that threaten existing power relations, the various degrees of political organization and autonomy, and the formation of new leadership cadres within subaltern groups.

This is why Gramsci undertakes a violent polemic against economism and sociologism represented by the various Lorianist schools of Sighele, Lombroso, Niceforo, Ferri, and Orano. For Gramsci, their notions cannot comprehend the essence of the dialectic. According to Gramsci's interpretation of historical materialism, the concepts of "automatism," "regularity" and "necessity," which he singles out in Marxist historiography, are not derived from the natural sciences, but from Ricardo's classical English economics—from one of those "three sources of Marxism" to which Marx and Kautsky make reference. Machiavelli's "fortune" and Vico's "Providence," i.e., the irrational and the unrepeatable, appear necessitated by the underlying material premises, described in the "Introduction" to the *Critique of Political Economy*. According to it, no society poses questions for which solutions had not already been prepared, and no system ends until after the complete development of its possibilities. In such a conception of the historical *a quo* and the *ad quem*, Marxism itself, for Gramsci, becomes a transitory theory, the philosophical reflection of a society divided into classes

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and destined one day to be eclipsed with it.

At that time, the process of the disintegration of *historicism* sanctioned the crisis of petty-Germanic beliefs that for a century had been held unexpressed and implicit within the multiform "Goethean forest." It vindicated *Kultur* against English and French civilization, as an alleged reaction to Enlightenment and Rationalism, and as a negation of natural law. Yet, historicism included Voltaire, Montesquieu, and even Gibbon among its founders. As the presumed ahistorical preservation of Prussian absolutism canonized in the *Historische Zeitschrift* (founded by Sybel in 1859) under Meinicke, the editor of this journal in Gramsci's time, historicism had become the spokesman of weak German liberalism.

Between von Ranke and Meinecke there had been Max Weber's influence. It had played a role similar to Croce's in Italy. In the historicism of the early 20th century there was room for discussion of the contradiction between ethics and power and for reflections on religion. Its teachers could be violent *Junkers* like Treitschke, mild-mannered Lutheran pastors like Weber's friend Troeltsch, and bakers' sons like Friedrich Meinecke. All of these realities were united only by one common fear, that of the consequences which the unity of theory and praxis inevitably entailed for the structure of German institutions. Troeltsch, who accused Marx of wanting to realize his ideals, Meinecke, who in his *Experiences* confessed to having enthusiastically taught Louis XIV's ethics while some soldiers were firing on Spartacists in the next classroom, expressed only the fatal inertia of the weak Weimar bourgeoisie: the same fear that Frederick the Second and Lessing had had of Germany's authoritarian conditions. It was a short step from the Bismarckian-Hitlerian myth to a certain historicist actualism which justified everything in the name of the present. Giovanni Gentile took this step.

There is nothing of this in Gramsci's historicism, which grew outside the German cultural horizon and which was simply "consciousness of the past": of the continuity between the past and present. It contains no trace of the identification of the real with the rational—a defect in every conservative political program also shared by certain brands of vulgar Marxism. The *Historismus* which developed in Germany from Dilthey through Meinecke, as an alternative ideology to the "historical school of economics," sought to salvage permanent values beyond historical contingencies. Gramsci's historicism, on the other hand, was founded on the particular concept of relativism in Marxist theory.

This is how one should understand the sensitivity for the continuity between events propounded throughout the *Notebooks*. The Gramsci who, in his notes on the *Risorgimento*, wrote that "if writing about history means to make the history of the present, then it is a great history book that in the present helps developing forces become more conscious of themselves and therefore more active and effective"—could not have had any sympathy for historicist resignation or for the struggle "against reason" unleashed by 19th century German thinkers. Once he answered his son's question "what is history good for?" in

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terms appropriate for a 12-year-old child. Yet, there was nothing in such a vulgarization that could not have been appropriated by the masters of historical materialism. The history of people who had lived, worked and thought explained what we are today, while the manifest differences between them and us explain what the future will be. All that, we will have recorded as our limits, as our "determinations." His was a militant history which wanted to be passionate and critical at the same time.[6]

Gramsci's "historical humanism" followed the *Manifesto* in the "exaltation of the greatness of the dying classes," against the "attic builders"—those idealists unable to locate the nexus between past, present, and future. His thought stands in the same relation to "official" historicism as the Marxian theory of the repetition of historical events—from tragedy to farce—stands to the Vichian and medieval concept of "flux and reflux." Because of these epistemological tools, the Gramscian critique turns out to be very powerful.

*Notebook* III is almost completely dedicated to Croce. The various aspects of the Neapolitan philosopher, of the "great intellectual" who attained a European and global recognition in the Italian cosmopolitan tradition, do not lead Gramsci to forget the analysis of the innermost features of his thought. During this period, absolute historicism, anti-Catholicism and the initially amicable relations with Gentile had become part of Croce's historiography, whose particular application in so-called "ethico-political history" was an alternative liberal proposal to Gentile's "statist history," to Volpe's "psycho-economic" or "economico-juridical" history, or Barbagallo's "positivist-Marxist history." Croce's youthful "revisionism" has its own research space, especially insofar as it concerns Graziadei's economic theories and intellectual development. Gramsci emphasizes the connections between Croce, Sorel and Bernstein. Yet, although not sparing him some of his rare sarcasm, Gramsci never forgets Croce's brief materialist phase, his past function of modernizing Italian intellectual life. Gramsci wrote: "One can say that Croce's historiography is a rebirth of a Restoration historiography adapted to the necessities and interests of the contemporary period... This historiography is a degenerated and mutilated Hegelianism, because his fundamental concern is the panicky fear of Jacobin movements, of every active intervention of the great popular masses as historically progressive factors." It is a right-Hegelianism which seeks to preserve the thesis by engulfing it in the antithesis, and which must therefore remove the destructive moment of progress. The emphasis of "form," constituted by ethico-political history, in comparison with "content," represented by events in general, renders identical, through the medium of "artistic catharsis," the still deliberately

6. One can thus reverse the accusation of "idealism" made by French structuralist Marxism against Gramsci and the whole Marxist historicist tradition from Engels to Della Volpe to Sartre. Croce's and Althusser's identical positions concerning abstraction and concretization, the logical-functional and the historico-deductive or "genetic" methods is enlightening. Labriola and Gramsci are far closer, regarding eternal "squabbles" of "general" history, to Marxian orthodoxy. Nor can they be blamed for the similarities that they share with certain positions articulated by the *Annales* school of Bloch and Febvre, so strongly attacked by structuralist Marxism.

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separate *res gestae* and the *historia rerum gestarum*. In the process of events becoming historiography, all rough features that remain alien to the history of the Spirit are mutilated while the history of the spirit becomes concretized in "great individuals."

With such an argument, Gramsci has a "totalist" position in the truest sense of the term. "Thus, the philosophy of praxis will criticize as improper and arbitrary the reduction of history only to ethico-political history, but will not exclude it." It is an important judgment in the contemporary framework that sees "total history" confronting history "from below." Elsewhere, he will rightly say that such "ethical" historiographies are nothing but modern and refined versions of the old "State Doctrine" with which the Prussian school of Sybel, Treitschke and Ranke fought early German sociologists such as Mahl and Stein. Croce's liberal versions of ethical science had been prepared by Meinecke in Germany, and hence were blandly opposed to the statist and romanticist authoritarianism of Gentile's historiography. He is accused of removing the most radical events from his two most important *Histories* for the political life of his time: the *Risorgimento* in regard to Italy, and the Napoleonic wars in regard to Europe. Thus, for Gramsci, Croce's history of freedom becomes the conscious freedom of the ruling classes.

This is crucial, and it is unfortunate that once more the editors of the 1948 version of the *Notebooks* twisted the pen of the scholarly prisoner in order to draw additional condemnations of Trotskyism in the sections dealing with the history of "hegemony." Far from being an insult, the "spirit of 1848" was for Gramsci the object of very serious study, related to his reflections on "caesarism" in his *Machiavelli*.

The dialectic of distinctions is related to that of opposites in Croce's philosophy and received considerable treatment. According to Gramsci, the previous "reversal" with regard to Hegel has to be carried out anew. Thus, the analysis of *Notebooks* III seeks to deal first with Croce's confrontation with Hegel, then with Gentile, and finally with Marx.[7] In Gramsci's judgment, Croce represents a "step backward." In a well-known letter to Tatiana Schucht, dated March 25, 1929, he notes that the Neapolitan philosopher takes one step forward from Hegel by going beyond metaphysics, but two steps back, by dissolving the relation between thought and nature and

7. As already indicated, on a theoretical level, "distinction" is a crucial point to be extensively discussed subsequently by Della Volpe, Althusser, and Godelier in relation to the notorious "theory of multiple factors." Gramsci correctly relates this to various categories such as "unity," "identity," "opposite," and "distinction." Croce's solution "is to be criticized as a merely verbal solution to real methodological problems, insofar as there are not only opposites, but also distincts. It postulated a break between history and political violence and applied his historiography only to those periods of expansion and social peace which allow for the development of art, morals and philosophy, i.e., what encourages culture, in contraposition to the "political and economic obsession." Thus, the Crocean contradiction is clear: history obtains in the absence of history, and historiography in the absence of books dealing with events external to spirit. Although in 1938, in *History as Thought and Action*, Croce attacked the supporters of the "unmoved mover" in historiography, i.e., those who sought a "fixed point" from which to observe the past, the famous 1911 critique to Feuter's volume is far more typical of his work.

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thought and historical society. He is a "reaction" grown on national soil because of a certain Machiavellian and counter-reformist heritage. Croce turned out to be the eternal Erasmus scandalized by Luther: an illusion, the attempt to acquire Hegelianism without breaking with Southern Italian conservatism in the same way that the Catholic Reformation approached the German Reformation without clashing with the Papacy.[8]

The development of Croce's historiography had led the young author of the 1893 monograph on *History under the General Concept of Art* to play the role of the prince-intellectual during the fascist period as the creator of a system in spite of himself. Written in opposition to Villari's scientism amidst many crises and indecisions, that short book already contained all of Croce's future work. Croce's intellectual trajectory paralleled that of bourgeois Italy. Positivism, idealism, Marxism and then once again idealism (in the historicist version) politically receptive to liberalism, fascism, and then once again to liberalism. Precisely this mechanical and contradictory epistemology permitted Croce to incorporate new phenomena appearing in the increasingly evident crises of the liberal regime through imperceptible shifts and *a posteriori* applications, in a philosophy which claimed to be a-systematic. It is not surprising, therefore, that Croce's final position is substantially different from his point of departure and that today integral historicism appears to us as an aggregate body characterized by minor changes in the initial position rather than as a monistic ontology. Gramsci knew all of Croce's works which, from 1912 to 1927, had been collected in the volume *Theory and History of Historiography*.

The initial polemic of this work against the pseudo-histories elaborated by philological, poetic and pragmatic historiography was only partially accepted by Gramsci. Both Croce and Gramsci shared a repugnance for the "pompous ignorance" of Niebuhr's erudite philological historiography which sought to discover reality through the simple accumulation of material. What in Croce was a "fear of documents" (a privileging of philosophical freedom *vis-à-vis* the real) in Gramsci became a vindication of the function of theory—of the tension between the text and the author. What in Croce remained lived experience (*Erlebnis*) became tension (*Spannung*) in Gramsci—lived experience gained through the dialectic of subject and object and not mortgaged by eidetic intuition. Thus, they also differed in their shared aversion toward Maurras' poetic-oratorical tendency and towards simple pragmatic instrumentalization: in Croce this was based on a philosophical-historiographical reason which was sharply separated from politics, while in Gramsci it was guided by the identity of reason and politics. This deterioration of historiography to an "ideally inferior" sphere (the "poetic" one), was a moral process in Croce, and a "practical" one yet to be explained in

8. It is irrelevant here that one could in turn accuse Gramsci of having been a Luther scandalized by Münzer, when he reviled the revolutionary syndicalists and Borghi's anarchists in the pages of *Ordine Nuovo* or denied his role in the formulation of the *Theses of Rome*. His analysis remains extremely to the point.

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Gramsci. Thus, there is unity and diversity between absolute historicism and historical materialism: as Croce's student, Gramsci accepts his teacher's rejection of "universal history," understood as an effort to unify in one "single cause" the total social process. After all, those were the times of the fusion (or "confusion") of "universal" and "general" history, with all the resulting equivocations of history and "philosophy of history."

But in Croce this rejection follows that of the philosophy of history and metaphysics, which he saw as one and the same—both products of the "universal" dimension. In fact, his rejection of historical materialism is to be understood along these lines. There is nothing of the sort in Gramsci, for whom historical materialism is certainly "philosophical," in the "ideological" sense. Yet, Gramsci also excludes a univocal determinism. The break becomes evident in regard to the rejection of "general history." Both Croce and Gramsci used the categories of "distinction" and "unity" to describe the relation between philosophy of history and determinism in order to destroy the problem of causality in Croce, and that of Lorianist immediacy in Gramsci. Applied to the relation between general history and special history, the categories of "distinction" and "unity" resulted in division in Croce and totality in Gramsci. For the latter, history is unitary independently of any philosophical considerations which would unify by distinguishing and separating. It is such at the level of materiality and of the object. If anything, it is the ideology that describes history which becomes necessarily unified. Thus, Croce's and Gramsci's positions could not have been more opposed to each other. For Croce, a separate reality is described by thought; for Gramsci, a unified reality is assailed by theory. Consequently, there is an immediately "political" moment. While in rejecting the philosophy of history, even if it is called "sociology," Croce rejected "executory" history [*giustiziero*] for the sake of "justificatory" history [*giustificatrice*], Gramsci posed the problem of praxis as the concrete dissolution of ideology in the same manner in which Lukacs consolidated practice and theory in a unitary dialectic.

In some of Gramsci's finest writings, people have seen Croce where they should have seen Hegel. Gramsci saw Croce's dynamic between development, finality and value (none other than the one established by Dilthey between time, finality and meaning) in terms of the simple Hegelian triad of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. This is how Croce's concepts survive in the *Notebooks*. Croce periodizes on the basis of eternal "laws of thought," while Gramsci deals with the Marxian succession of modes of production. Croce interprets autobiography as a synthesis of Spirit (as a moment of Spirit's life concretized in historiography), while Gramsci reads biographies by integrating their content within the totality of a concrete social system.[9]

9. It is, of course, worth noting the discussion on the particularity and specialty of every history recorded in Croce's philosophical-historiography, since French structuralist Marxist critiques of Gramsci's "Crocianism" constantly move along "Crocean" lines. Once again we find here the question of "time," which had already brought Dilthey and his followers to distinguish between legal and individual disciplines, and subsequently to psychological investigations of the "different times" of special histories.

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Croce's philosophy, outlined in the 1948 volume on *Philosophy and Historiography*, reached maturity after the 1930s. After the death of Gramsci, its reference points had been the declining phase of Gentile's fortunes and the return to Volpe's juridico-economic themes. The coming of the "clerical period," the extension of religious education from the elementary to secondary schools after the Concordat, had considerably lessened Gentile's influence. Gramsci had known him both as a reactionary and revolutionary. With the passing on of cultural responsibilities to others during subsequent years, Gentile, nine years younger than Croce, found himself increasingly out of step with Fascism. Today we can understand a lot more about the true significance of Croce's work. It had been forced to reveal and correct itself into "ethical and political history" in opposition to Gentile's actualist statism. Within such a context, morality had the function of raising historiographic notions aiming at norms of social behavior. Under pressure from the facts, artistic autobiography had become "internal history," different from "external histories" and transmissible to the latter only by adhering to very careful criteria. Prediction was removed from historical work. "Living historiography," the final product of Croce's thought, thus became the last refuge of his theoretical world against the objectivity of history, on the practical level, and against "scientific" history on the academic level.

An historian of ideas as well as a Marxist historian, Gramsci consistently related his own "specialization" to the totality. He cannot be accused of developing philological interpretations typical of certain traditional Italian Marxist historiographies. Thus, Candeloro is wrong when he claims that the reason why there have not been too many studies of rural economic history by Italian "Marxists" is to be found in Gramsci's "Crocianism."[10]

It is enough to mention a few points. Gramsci had asked himself how philosophy becomes social action and "political ideology," how "tradition" is to be defeated in the deep consciousness of Italy's peasant masses. A student of tradition, he sought to uncover its secret mechanisms. Organicity was seen as a characteristic of the rising classes. The class which best understood its own past by distinguishing it from the multiplicity of experiences of the entire society was destined to attain "hegemony." For Gramsci's inquiries, the continuity of tradition within a society to be renovated presented a concrete obstacle to be overcome. The insertion of a new behavior in an archaic model opened a whole new field of phenomena. The fall of the rationality of a *Weltanschauung* is an event which has its own pace and which almost always occurs in a few geographical centers and among a few social strata. In such a context, Gramsci introduced the concept of "conjuncture" to counterbalance

10. Candeloro, "Storiografia contemporanea," in *Storia* (Milan: Feltrinelli-Fischer, 1970). Actually, there are many indications in Gramsci that his successors have failed to follow through. Judgments such as those scattered throughout the volume of the *Encyclopedia Feltrinelli-Fischer*, dedicated to *History*, are therefore all the more dangerous insofar as they assume that Gramsci's historiography has actually been appropriated already by Marxists and communist historians.

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its opposite, "permanence." Thus, it was not conjuncture which brought change, as today it is commonly understood by "Marxist" historians such as those of *Annales* (Vilar or Soboul) or Poulantzas, but rather what remained once the moment of conjuncture had passed: organicity. In this sense, if we were to distinguish between Marxists who have concerned themselves with revolutionary periods and Marxists attentive to epochs of relative social peace, Gramsci would be one of the few who—to his credit—contributed to the latter.


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# INTRODUCTION TO ADORNO'S "THE ACTUALITY OF PHILOSOPHY"

## by Benjamin Snow

During the 1960s, Adorno's "negative dialectics" became identified with the critical theory of the Frankfurt Institute, of which he had become the most illustrious member. Yet critical theory was never a fully articulated philosophy meaning the same thing for all the members of the Institute. It was more of a set of shared assumptions that distinguished their approach from bourgeois or "traditional" theory.[1] Within this common frame, the methodology of individual members could and did vary. Thus, the term critical theory lacks historical precision, referring generally to the Institute's theoretical orientation during the thirty-odd years of Max Horkheimer's directorship.

Although Adorno later clearly felt comfortable being called a "critical theorist," he first outlined the distinguishing characteristics of his own method seven years before he became a full-fledged Institute member. The occasion was the inaugural lecture marking his entry into the philosophy faculty of the University of Frankfurt, "The Actuality of Philosophy," which remained unpublished until after his death and appears in translation here. At the time (May 1931) Horkheimer had been the Institute's director for only a few months, and the new orientation in critical methodology that he brought to it was just beginning to take shape. Of course, even then Horkheimer's ideas had much in common with Adorno's, due to their close personal and intellectual friendship. They had both moved toward Marxism in the late 1920s but the impact of dialectical materialism led them in different directions. Horkheimer turned toward the social sciences, while Adorno, instead of joining his friend at the Institute, chose to accept an academic position.

The young Adorno saw himself as a philosopher and an artist,[2] not a social scientist, and he was then clearly more excited by the literary criticism of Walter Benjamin than by the empirical social research projects of the Frankfurt Institute. Nor was the Institute's evaluation of Adorno much more enthusiastic: it is worth noting that two articles which he submitted to the Institute journal, the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, in the 1930s repeatedly

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1. As Adorno noted, the term critical theory was "Horkheimer's phrasing." Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973) p. 197. Horkheimer had first outlined its distinguishing characteristics in his 1937 article on "Traditional and Critical Theory," now in his *Critical Theory*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell and others (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp. 188-243.

2. As he later recalled in comparing himself to Horkheimer: "I, however, by background and early development, was an artist, musician, yet animated by an impulse to account for art and its possibility in the present, in which something objective also desired expression, the suspicion of the insufficiency of a naive aesthetic procedure in view of the tendencies of society." In Theodor W. Adorno, "Offener Brief an Max Horkheimer," *Die Zeit*, February 12, 1965, p. 32.

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failed to pass the review board.[3] And, although the articles by Adorno which were accepted—"Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik" (1932) and "Ueber Jazz" (1936)—were of lasting importance to his intellectual development,[4] his major works of these years were the more strictly philosophical studies of Kierkegaard and Husserl. The themes of jazz and the social condition of music reflected the Institute's primary concern with the question of how *geistige* products functioned to support or challenge the *status quo*. This was something quite distinct from Adorno's self-prescribed task: fostering the liquidation of idealist philosophy.

Horkheimer believed as firmly as Adorno that bourgeois philosophy was in a state of decay,[5] but he seems to have concluded that if metaphysics were no longer possible, then the philosopher had to look to the social sciences in order to find truth. Although these sciences, in turn, needed a critical, speculative perspective, philosophy as a separate discipline was eliminated.[6] For Horkheimer, the problem of "the object" tended to dissolve into (Marxian) sociology, the problem of "the subject" into (Freudian) psychology,[7] and critical theory attempted to explain their interrelations. In his inaugural lecture as Institute director, he spoke of the dialectical interaction between theory and empirical research.[8]

Adorno, however, discerned a dialectical process *within philosophy itself*. Indeed, he had an almost Hegelian faith in the immanent logic of philosophy, in its historical development as the unfolding of truth, even if, in very un-

3. A study of Mannheim went through two revisions (1934 and 1937) yet never appeared in the journal—a third revision was finally published elsewhere. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, "Ueber Mannheims Wissenssoziologie" (1953), reprinted in *Prismen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1955). A 1937 article on Husserl, revised by Adorno in 1938, was never published, but copies of both drafts are to be found in Adorno's estate.

4. In the 1932 article and in the more than forty short pieces on music that he published in a variety of journals and newspapers during the thirties, Adorno laid the groundwork for an aesthetic philosophy whose formulation occupied him until his death. (The book manuscript, *Aesthetische Theorie*, was published posthumously in 1970 as vol. 7 of the *Gesammelte Schriften*.) This is not to suggest that the early music essays in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, which contained elements of an aesthetic theory as well as a critical theory of mass culture, were insignificant compared with his book-length philosophical studies; the point is simply that whereas the Institute was more interested in a (philosophical) *sociology* of art, Adorno's primary concern was in a (sociological) *philosophy*—of aesthetics as well as of epistemology.

5. As he stated in 1932, the idealist premise, the identity of subject and object, "...has long since collapsed, and with it, the edifice of Hegelian philosophy....'Absolute' philosophy...is a thing of the past." (Horkheimer, "Hegel und das Problem der Metaphysik," *Festschrift für Carl Grünberg: Zum 70. Geburtstag* [Leipzig: Verlag von C.L. Hirschfeld, 1932], p. 192.)

6. Horkheimer's faith that the social sciences could answer the traditional questions of philosophy through empirical research was not something Adorno shared. Against this tendency, Adorno, as he later recalled, tried to "strengthen the anti-positivistic, speculative bent" of Horkheimer. (Theodor W. Adorno, "Offener Brief an Max Horkheimer," *op. cit.* p. 32.)

7. These two theories, he felt, provided "a formulation of the old [philosophical] questions more appropriate to the state of our present knowledge...." (Max Horkheimer, "Die gegensärtige Lage der Sozialphilosophie und die Aufgaben eines Instituts für Sozialforschung" [1931], *Sozialphilosophische Studien: Aufsätze, Reden und Vorträge, 1930-1972*, ed. Werner Brede [Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1972], p. 43.)

8. He advocated "...a continuous dialectical penetration and development between philosophical theory and the practice of the single scientific disciplines..." (*Ibid.*, p. 40.)

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Hegelian fashion, he believed that truth critically challenged the course of history rather than merging with it. Convinced that social contradictions appeared within the material of philosophy in a mediated form and that the philosopher, like the artist, had to be "absolutely modern," grasping these contradictions in their most current and (in an age of disintegration) their most antagonistic manifestations, Adorno took up the struggles bequeathed by the preceding generation of philosophers. By placing himself within their ranks, he pressed the antinomies of their theories to the point where the dialectical negation of idealism might be achieved.[9] This challenge from within, on the basis of philosophy's own inherent, historically developed logic, in order to break out of bourgeois idealism and into revolutionary materialism was what Adorno meant by "immanent criticism" and it constituted the substance of his idea of a "logic of disintegration."

This program bound Adorno to Benjamin more than to Horkheimer. Although Horkheimer, too, claimed that if bourgeois theory were to be effectively challenged it had to be from "within," to him this meant simply that bourgeois theory could not be dismissed by merely adapting an external, anti-bourgeois metaphysics. Rather, one had to expose the gap between bourgeois theory and its own reality. In his essays Horkheimer confronted bourgeois concepts (of justice, reason, individualism) with the actuality of bourgeois society (its injustice, irrationalism, monopoly capitalism), pointed to the discrepancy between the potential affluence of present productive forces and the existing scarcity, and demonstrated that *Lebensphilosophie*, for example, betrayed its own intent of protest because, in functioning as a support for the societal *status quo*, it converged with the very positivism it attacked.[10] But unlike Adorno, Horkheimer did not get deeply involved in the technical controversies of contemporary philosophy.[11] Hence, although almost all his articles in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* during the 1930s were critiques of bourgeois philosophy, they were not themselves "philosophical" in the strict sense of the term. Keeping one foot outside the discipline, he traced themes and concepts descriptively through the history of the bourgeois era—his knowledge of history was far superior to Adorno's—so that their social function might be revealed.[12]

9. As he wrote in his inaugural speech: "Only an essentially undialectical philosophy, one which aims at ahistorical truth, could maintain that the old problems could simply be removed by forgetting them and starting fresh from the beginning. Only in the strictest dialectical communication with the most recent solution-attempts of philosophy and of philosophic terminology can a real change of philosophical consciousness prevail."

10. For an English summary of Horkheimer's writings of the early 1930s, see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), pp. 44-65.

11. Horkheimer's prime concern was *Ideologiekritik*, i.e., how it was that (bourgeois) "views valid in themselves and theoretical and aesthetic works of undeniably high quality can in certain circumstances operate ideologically. . . ." (Horkheimer, "Notes on Science and the Crisis" [1932], in *Critical Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.) Adorno, convinced as he was that the *social* invalidity of bourgeois thought was manifested *immanently*, would not have held that such thought could be "valid in itself;" at the same time, he believed that ideology, correctly interpreted, was the source of truth.

12. The distinction can be illustrated by comparing Adorno's critical analysis of the concept

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Horkheimer thus moved between theory and society, pointing out corresponding structures in consciousness and reality in a manner similar to that of the early Lukács (and to Lukács' teacher Wilhelm Dilthey, whose work Horkheimer appreciated).[13] By contrast, Adorno attempted quite literally to make the structure of bourgeois society visible in the very words of the bourgeois texts: dialectical exegesis, that was more *Sprachkritik* than *Ideologiekritik*, more critical *interpretation* than theory.[14]

The difference between Adorno's and Horkheimer's methods implied different grounds for determining a theory's validity. Horkheimer's arguments rested on principles of moral rectitude[15]—indeed, principles developed by the very bourgeois society that he was attacking. As he explained: "If we take seriously the ideas by which the bourgeoisie explains its own order—free exchange, free competition, harmony of interests, and so on—and if we follow them to their logical conclusion, they manifest their inner contradiction and therefore *their real opposition to the bourgeois order.*"[16] The transcendent element of idealism which allowed a moral distinction between the is and the ought remained essential to Horkheimer despite his advocacy of empirical research. Adorno would later recall, "with you the primary thing was indignation over injustice," and he noted that Horkheimer was indebted to the Judaic ethics of his family as well as bourgeois enlightenment principles for this impulse.[17]

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of history with two of Horkheimer's early essays. Adorno's approach, outlined in his 1932 speech to the *Kantgesellschaft* in Frankfurt (in Adorno, "Die Idee der Naturgeschichte," *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 345-365), was to juxtapose the antithetical concepts of nature and history in such a way that neither was posited as the foundation of an affirmative philosophy of history. His argument was dialectical and polemical rather than descriptive. By contrast, in a 1930 essay, "Anfänge der bürgerlichen Geschichtsphilosophie," Horkheimer's approach was to outline the historical development of the bourgeois concept of history from Machiavelli to Vico and Hegel, identifying both its progressive and regressive elements with regard to their ideological function. His program for a theory of history, outlined in another speech delivered to the *Kantgesellschaft*, suggested that the problem, while formerly the concern of the metaphysician, could not best be dealt with by Marx's "scientific" theory and (Freudian) psychology. (See "Geschichte und Psychologie" [1932], reprinted in Max Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie: Eine Dokumentation*, ed. Alfred Schmidt [Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1968], vol. 1, pp. 9-30.)

13. His aim was "to point out the common structural characteristics of well known developments in modern history." (Max Horkheimer, "Egoismus und Freiheitsbewegung," *Kritische Theorie, op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 106.) For a discussion of Horkheimer's evaluation of Dilthey, his criticisms as well as the points of agreement, see Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination, op. cit.*, pp. 48-53.

14. Ricoeur's description of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche as practitioners of an art of interpreting as an "exercise in suspicion," a "hermeneutics of demystification," applies just as well to Adorno. Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Dean Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 33.

15. When, for example, Horkheimer criticized the acceptance of what had historically evolved as "second nature," he was concerned not only that, as "a suprahistorical eternal category" it was in fact incorrect, but that, in regard to moral will, it was "a sign of contemptible weakness." In Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," *op. cit.*, p. 210.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 215, italics added. Cf. also Max Horkheimer (alias Heinrich Regius), *Dämmerung: Notizen in Deutschland* (Zurich: Verlag Oprecht und Helbling, 1934), p. 193, where he writes: "The chasm between the moral standards which the Europeans have acknowledged since the advent of Christianity, and those which these Europeans in fact practice, is immeasurable."

17. Adorno, "Offener Brief an Max Horkheimer," *op. cit.*, p. 32.

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If the impulse for Horkheimer's social criticism was an ethical, quasi-religious humanism, Adorno was primarily concerned with the problem of truth. For him, not issues of right or wrong, but judgments of true or false were the necessary ground for the validation of theory. In an era when metaphysics had lost all legitimacy, Adorno kept asking the metaphysical question; just as in an era which had proclaimed God dead, Horkheimer refused to dismiss the moral problem of good and evil.[18]

Adorno, the metaphysician with no faith in metaphysics; Horkheimer, the moralist with no belief in Divine Providence: to describe them thus may in fact express what separated their intellectual paths not only in the 1930s, but throughout their lives as well.[19] The difference accounts for Horkheimer's greater concern with the gap between "imputed" and empirical proletarian consciousness,[20] for he considered that in the modern era, moral praxis was necessary political praxis. Indeed, the failure of the proletariat to achieve revolutionary consciousness became the focus of the Institute's research during the first decade of Horkheimer's directorship,[21] whereas Adorno's overriding interest in the questions of the truth of theory or the validity of art as issues totally removed from the question of proletariat consciousness caused the very idea of a collective revolutionary subject to drop out of this theory.[22]

Still, the polarity between metaphysician and moralist should not be stressed too strongly, as it was never categorical. Their work was essentially complementary, and became increasingly so after 1938. Even if Adorno's

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18. Adorno was still struggling with the question of the possibility of metaphysics in the final chapter of *Negative Dialectics*. Cf. Horkheimer's statement in 1934: "I did not know how far metaphysicians are correct; perhaps there exists somewhere an especially compelling metaphysical system or fragment. But I do know that metaphysicians are usually only minimally impressed by that which torments and afflicts human beings." (Max Horkheimer, *Dämmerung*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.) Horkheimer's moral concern for physical suffering (of animals as well as human beings) as opposed to Adorno's more cerebral orientation is illustrated by Adorno's recollection: "Once you [Horkheimer] said to me that I perceived animals as human whereas you saw humans as animals. There is something to that." (Adorno, "Offener Brief an Max Horkheimer," p. 32.)

19. As Adorno wrote: "the tension between the poles from whence we came did not disappear, and grew to be fruitful for us." *Ibid.*

20. Here, as elsewhere, Horkheimer was closer to the early Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness*. He viewed the intellectual's role to be the articulation of imputed class consciousness, although, like Adorno, he refused to sanction Party control of the intellectual's theoretical work. See Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," *op. cit.*, pp. 221-224.

21. In his inaugural address as director he wrote: "the discussion concerning society crystalizes gradually and with increasing clarity around one question, namely the question of the connection between the economic life of society, the psychic development of the individuals, and transformations in the cultural realm." In Horkheimer, "Die gegenwärtige Lage der Sozialphilosophie und die Aufgaben eines Instituts für Sozialforschung" (1931), *Sozialphilosophische Studien*, p. 43. The problem led Horkheimer, as it did Wilhelm Reich (see his *Massenpsychologie des Faschismus* [Kopenhagen: Verlag für Sexualpolitik, 1933]), to merge Marxist social theory with Freudian psychology: "What needs to be examined is how the psychological mechanism evolved whereby it is possible for the tensions between social classes to remain latent, tensions which, due to the economic situation, press toward conflict." Horkheimer, "Geschichte und Psychologie" (1932), *Kritische Theorie*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 21.

22. Although neither saw theory as subservient to political praxis, for Adorno the relation between the two was more highly mediated, and developments in theory remained more self-contained.

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original choice was to teach philosophy rather than to join Horkheimer's Institute, he acknowledged from the first the dependence of his kind of philosophy on the findings of social science research,[23] just as Horkheimer considered speculative theory indispensable to the process of research. One was doing sociological philosophy; the other, philosophical sociology. Moreover, Horkheimer shared Adorno's interest, if not his preoccupation, with the task of establishing a new ground for dialectical, materialist theory.[24] In fact, Adorno's correspondence makes it clear that hope of collaborating with Horkheimer on this task was one reason why Adorno finally decided in 1938[25] to join the Institute in the United States.

It is interesting that the description of critical theory which appeared in the Institute's journal in 1941 (in the first English issue) reflected Adorno's more rigorous conception of immanent criticism,[26] as well as a very Benjaminian notion of the inductive method of arriving at truth,[27] indications that the change in the Institute's theory at that time was much the result of a power shift following Adorno's arrival as it was a response to world events, while Adorno's own position remained remarkably consistent over time.[28]

This is not to suggest that Adorno had no new ideas after the age of thirty. The theme of domination which became central in his writings after 1940 was

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23. In his 1931 speech, translated here, Adorno noted that philosophy would "...have to take its specific disciplinary material preponderantly from sociology...."

24. In a 1932 essay, Horkheimer, referring to the tasks philosophy had still to do, reflected the same spirit of philosophy which Adorno had articulated in his inaugural address the year before: "It is also fully possible to present the results of empirical research in such a way that the life of the objects comes to expression on all sides." (Horkheimer, "Hegel und das Problem der Metaphysik," in *Kritische Theorie, op.cit.*, vol. 2, p. 195.)

25. As he wrote Benjamin in June of that year: "Furthermore, the literary plans of Max and me are now taking on a very concrete form. It is as good as set that we will first of all write a long essay together on the new open-ended form of the dialectic. We are both totally full of the plan..." Letter, Adorno to Benjamin, June 8, 1938 (Frankfurt am Main, Adorno Estate). With the outbreak of war, however, this essay, part of a "proposed great materialistic logic," was put aside in favor of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the theme which more adequately expressed their shock at the barbarism of Auschwitz and Hiroshima. When Adorno finally wrote his essay on the new form of the dialectic in 1966 (*Negative Dialectics*), it was all by himself. Thus, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was, in a sense, a preliminary study for *Negative Dialectics*, as a comprehensive analysis of the history of the Enlightenment and how it had run amok: one had to know what had gone wrong with Reason in order to redeem it.

26. "[O]wing to the fact the concept is to be formed under the aspect of the historical totality to which it pertains, sociology should be able to develop this changing [social] pattern from the very content of the concept instead of adding specific contents from without." In Max Horkheimer, "Notes on Institute Activities," *Studies in Social Science*, 9:1 (1941), p. 123.

27. The method was described as "inductive," not in the traditional sense of collecting individual experiences until they attained the weight of universal laws, but of seeking "the universal within the particular, not above or beyond it;" because "society is a 'system' in the material sense that every single social field or relation contains and reflects in various ways the whole itself." *Ibid.*

28. It should be noted that the mature Adorno was not uncritical of his own early efforts. In a note to the 1966 reprinting of his Kierkegaard study, he said that he now found the book too affirmative, too hopeful. In reprinting his early music essays he sometimes altered sections which seemed "inexcusably idealistic" (see, e.g., his note to *Moments Musicaux* [1964]). But it is still remarkable that Adorno could publish so many of his early essays alongside his mature works with little or no revision.

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heavily indebted to the Institute's theoretical and empirical work during the 1930s on the problem of authority[29]—work which Adorno carried further in his contribution to *The Authoritarian Personality*. Nor did those ideas which remained constant in his theory emerge full-blown like Minerva out of his youthful head; one has the sense from his early writings that his formulation of concepts preceded his own full understanding of their potentialities. Only after years of working with them was he able to develop out of their abstract possibilities a full, concrete meaning.

The goal of transcending idealism by leading its concepts via their own immanent logic to the point of self-liquidation was one idea to which Adorno kept returning. As he wrote in the preface to *Negative Dialectics*: "To use the strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity—this is what the author felt to be his task ever since he came to trust his own mental impulses."[30] This was the impetus for his major study on Husserl, *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie*,[31] and it was the task which he first proposed for philosophy in his inaugural lecture.

Indeed, it is tempting to suggest that Adorno may have had this latter document before him when he was writing the introduction to *Negative Dialectics*, so great is the similarity of their philosophical intent.[32] "The Actuality of Philosophy" must be viewed therefore as a key document for introducing the most important concepts in Adorno's thought and of the "negative dialectics" into which his philosophy evolved.

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29. *Studien über Authorität und Familie*, ed. Max Horkheimer (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1936). We may note, however, that criticism of the domination of nature was already explicit in Adorno's Kierkegaard study (written between 1928 and 1933), and that it played a role in his critique of Wagner, also written before Adorno joined the Institute, whereas in the year Adorno published his Kierkegaard book, Horkheimer could still write: "For true human freedom is not to be equated either with indeterminateness or with mere arbitrariness; instead, it is identical with the domination of nature within and without us through rational decision." In Max Horkheimer, "Zum Problem der Voraussage in den Sozialwissenschaften" (1933), reprinted in Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie* vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

30. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. xx.

31. Written 1934-37, and revised and published in 1956.

32. In an editor's note to the first (posthumous) publication of the address, Tiedemann commented that this and several other early essays, "unusually programmatic for Adorno's thinking," introduced motifs and ideas which "anticipate something like a companion piece to *Negative Dialectics*." Rolf Tiedemann, "Editorische Nachbemerkung," in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften, op.cit.*, vol. 1, p. 383.

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# THE ACTUALITY OF PHILOSOPHY*

## by Theodor W. Adorno

Whoever chooses philosophy as a profession today must first reject the illusion that earlier philosophical enterprises began with: that the power of thought is sufficient to grasp the totality of the real. No justifying reason could rediscover itself in a reality whose order and form suppresses every claim to reason; only polemically does reason present itself to the knower as total reality, while only in traces and ruins is it prepared to hope that it will ever come across correct and just reality. Philosophy which presents reality as such today only veils reality and eternalizes its present condition. Prior to every answer, such a function is already implicit in the question—that question which today is called radical and which is really the least radical of all: the question of being (*Sein*) itself, as expressly formulated by the new ontological blueprints,[1] and as, despite all contraditions, fundamental to the idealist systems, now allegedly overcome. This question assumes as the possibility of its answer that being itself is appropriate to thought and available to it, that the idea of existing being (*des Seienden*) can be examined. The adequacy of thinking about being as a totality, however, has degenerated and consequently the idea of existing being has itself become impervious to questioning, for the idea could stand only over a round and closed reality as a star in clear transparence, and has now perhaps faded from view for all time, ever since the images of our life are guaranteed through history alone. The idea of being has become powerless in philosophy; it is nothing more than an empty form-principle whose archaic dignity helps to cover any content whatsoever. The fullness of the real, as totality, does not let itself be subsumed under the idea of being which might allocate meaning to it; nor can the idea of existing being be built up out of elements of reality. It [the idea of being] is lost for philosophy, and thereby its claim to the totality of the real is struck at its source.

The history of philosophy itself bears witness to this. The crisis of idealism comes at the same time as a crisis in philosophy's pretensions to totality. The *autonome ratio* [autonomous reason]—this was the thesis of every idealistic system—was supposed to be capable of developing the concept of reality, and

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*This speech was delivered by Adorno May 7, 1931, as his inaugural lecture to the philosophy faculty of the University of Frankfurt where he taught until 1933. The topic of Adorno's first seminar was Walter Benjamin's book, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (completed in 1925 and published in 1928), a study which Benjamin intended as his *Habilitationsschrift* but which was rejected by the academic establishment. Adorno's speech reflects strongly the influence of Benjamin's *Trauerspiel* study. It was to have been dedicated to Benjamin in published form, but the planned publication did not take place. The speech was found in Adorno's estate after his death and appears for the first time in vol. 1 of his *Gesammelte Schriften*.

1. Adorno is referring to Martin Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (1927), which by 1931 had made a significant impact within academic circles.

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in fact all reality, from out of itself. This thesis has disintegrated. The Neo-Kantianism of the Marburg School, which labored most strenuously to gain the content of reality from logical categories, has indeed preserved its self-contained form as a system, but has thereby renounced every right over reality and has withdrawn into a formal region in which every determination of content is condemned to virtually the farthest point of an unending process. Within idealism, the position opposed to the Marburg School, Simmel's *Lebensphilosophie* with its psychologistic and irrationalist orientations, has admittedly maintained contact with the reality with which it deals, but in so doing has lost all claim to make sense out of the empirical world which presses in upon it, and becomes resigned to "the living" as a blind and unenlightened concept of nature which it vainly attempts to raise the unclear, illusory transcendence of the "more-than-life." The southwest-German School of Rickert, finally, which mediates between the extremes, purports that its "values" represent more concrete and applicable philosophical criteria than the ideas of the Marburg School, and has developed a method which sets empirical reality in relation, however questionable, to those values. But the locus and source of the values remains undetermined; they lie between logical necessity and psychological multiplicity somewhere, not binding within reality, not transparent within the mind, an ontology of appearances which is as little able to bear the question of value-from-whence as that of value-for-what. Working apart from the attempts at grand resolutions of idealist philosophy are the scientistic philosophies, which give up from the beginning the basic idealist question regarding the constitution of reality and, still within the frame of a propadeutics of the separate, developed disciplines, grant validity only to the natural sciences, and thereby mean to possess secure ground in the given, be it the unity of consciousness (*Bewusstseinszusammenhang*), or be it the research of the separate disciplines. Losing contact with the historical problems of philosophy, they forgot that in every assumption their own statements are inextricably bound to historical problems and the history of those problems, and are not to be resolved independent of them.

Inserted into this situation is the effort of the philosophic spirit which is known to us in present day under the name of phenomenology: the effort, following the disintegration of the idealist systems and with the instrument of idealism, the *autonome ratio*, to gain a trans-subjective, binding order of being. It is the deepest paradox of all phenomenological intentions that, by means of the same categories produced by subjective, post-Cartesian thought, they strive to gain just that objectivity which these intentions originally opposed. It is thus no accident that phenomenology in Husserl took precisely its starting point from transcendental idealism, and the late products of phenomenology are all the less able to disavow this origin, the more they try to conceal it. It was the authentically productive and fruitful discovery of Husserl—more important than the externally more effective method of *Wesenschau* [essential intuition]—that he recognized in the meaning of the

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concept of the non-deducible given (*unableitbaren Gegebenheit*), as developed by the positivist schools, the fundamental problem of the relationship between reason and reality. He rescued from psychology the concept of the originally given intuition, and in the development of the descriptive method of philosophy, he won back a certainty of limited analysis which had long been lost in the separate disciplines. But it cannot be denied—and the fact that Husserl expressed it so openly is proof of his great and clear honesty—that every one of the Husserlian analyses of the given rests on an implicit system of transcendental idealism, which Husserl ultimately formulated: that the "jurisdiction of reason" (*Rechtsrechnung der Vernunft*) remains the court of final appeal for the relation between reason and reality and that therefore all Husserlian descriptions belong to the domain of this reason. Husserl purified idealism from every excess of speculation and brought it up to the standard of the highest reality within its reach. But he didn't burst it [idealism] open. As with Cohen and Natorp, his domain is ruled by the autonomous mind, with the important difference, however, that he has renounced the claim of the productive power of mind, the Kantian and Fichtean spontaneity, and resigns himself, as only Kant himself had done, to take possession of the sphere of that which is adequately within his reach. The traditional interpretation of philosophical history of the last thirty years would like to understand this self-resignation of Husserlian phenomenology as its limitation, and views it as the beginning of a development which leads ultimately to the plan of working out just that order of being which in Husserl's description of the noetic-noematic relationship could be only formally laid out. I must explicitly contradict this interpretation. The transition to "material phenomenology" has only apparently succeeded, and at the price of that certainty of the findings which alone provided the legitimacy of the phenomenological method. If in Max Scheler's development the eternal, basic truths alternate in sudden changes, to be exiled finally into the powerlessness of transcendence, then one can certainly recognize the tirelessly questioning impulse of a thinking which takes part in truth only in moving from error to error. But Scheler's puzzling and disquieting development needs to be understood more rigorously than as the fate of an individual mind. On the contrary, it indicates that the transition of phenomenology from the formal-idealist to the material and objective region cannot succeed with continuity or total assurance, that instead the images of transhistorical truth, which at one time [Scheler's] philosophy projected so seductively onto the background of closed, Catholic theory, became confused and disintegrated as soon as they were sought for in just that reality, the comprehension of which was in fact precisely what constituted the program of "material phenomenology." Scheler's last change of direction appears to me to possess its authentic, exemplary validity in his recognition of the gap between the eternal ideas and reality, the overcoming of which led phenomenology to enter the material sphere, as itself material-metaphysical, and thus he abandoned reality to a blind impulse (*Drang*) with a relationship

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to the heaven of ideas that is dark and problematic, and leaves room for only the weakest trace of hope. With Scheler, material phenomenology has dialectically revoked itself. Only the metaphysics of the impulse is left over from the ontological design; the only remaining eternity over which his philosophy has disposal is that of a boundless and uncontrolled dynamic. Viewed under the aspect of this self-revocation of phenomenology, Heidegger's theory also presents itself differently than is apparent from the pathos of the beginning which is responsible for its external effect.

With Heidegger, at least in his published writings, the question of objective ideas and objective being has been replaced by the subjective. The challenge of material ontology is reduced to the realm of subjectivity, within the depths of which it searches for what it was not able to locate in the open fullness of reality. It is thus no accident, in the philosophical-historical sense as well, that Heidegger falls back on precisely the latest plan for a subjective ontology produced by Western thinking: the existentialist philosophy of Sören Kierkegaard. But Kierkegaard's plan is irreparably shattered. No firmly grounded being has been able to reach Kierkegaard's restless, inner-subjective dialectic; the last depth which opened up to it was that of the despair into which subjectivity disintegrated, an objective despair which transformed the design of being within subjectivity into a design of hell. It knows of no other way to escape this hellish space than by a "leap" into transcendence which remains an inauthentic and empty act of thought, itself subjective, and which finds its highest determination in the paradox that here the subjective mind must sacrifice itself and retain belief instead, the contents of which, accidental for subjectivity, derive solely from the Biblical word. Only through the assumption of an essentially undialectical and historically pre-dialectical "ready at hand" (*zurhanden*) reality is Heidegger able to evade such a consequence. However, a leap and an undialectical negation (*Negat*) of subjective being is also Heidegger's ultimate justification, with the sole difference that the analysis of the "existing there" (*Vorfindlichen*), whereby Heidegger remains bound to phenomenology and breaks in principle with Kierkegaard's idealist speculation, avoids the transcendence of belief which is grasped spontaneously with the sacrifice of subjective mind, and instead recognizes solely the transcendence to a vitalist "thus being" (*Sosein*): in death. With Heidegger's metaphysics of death, phenomenology seals a development which Scheler already inaugurated with the theory of impulse. It cannot be concealed that phenomenology is on the verge of ending in precisely that vitalism against which it originally declared battle: the transcendence of death with Simmel is distinguished from Heidegger's solely in that it remains within psychological categories whereas Heidegger speaks in ontological ones. However, in the material itself, for example in the analysis of the anxiety phenomenon, it would be hard to find a sure way to distinguish them.

In accordance with this interpretation of the transition of phenomenology into vitalism, Heidegger could evade the second great threat to

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phenomenological ontology, that posed by historicism, only by ontologizing time itself, i.e., putting it forth as that which constituted the essence of man whereby the effort of material phenomenology to discover the eternal in man paradoxically dissolved: as eternal, only temporality remained. The claims of phenomenology are satisfied only by those categories, from the absolute rule of which phenomenology wanted thought to be exempt: mere subjectivity and mere temporality. With the concept of "thrownness" (*Geworfenheit*), which is set forth as the ultimate condition of man's being, life by itself becomes as blind and meaningless as only it was in *Lebensphilosophie*, and death is as incapable of alotting a positive meaning here as there. The claim to totality made by thought is thrown back upon thought itself, and it is finally shattered there too. All that is needed is an understanding of the narrowness of the Heideggerian existential categories of thrownness, anxiety, and death, which are in fact not able to banish the fullness of what is living, and the pure concept of "life" completely seizes the Heideggerian ontological blueprint. If appearances are not deceiving, then with this further development, phenomenological philosophy is preparing for its own final disintegration. For the second time, philosophy stands powerless before the question of being. It can no more describe being as free-standing and fundamental than it was able earlier to develop it from out of itself.

I have discussed the most recent history of philosophy, not for a general intellectual history orientation, but because only out of the historical entanglement of questions and answers does the question of philosophy's actuality emerge precisely. And that simply means, after the failure of efforts for a grand and total philosophy: whether philosophy is itself at all actual. By "actuality" is understood not its vague "maturity" or immaturity on the basis of non-binding conceptions regarding the general intellectual situation, but much more: whether, after the failure of the last great efforts, there exists an adequacy between the philosophic questions and the possibility of their being answered at all; whether the authentic results of the recent history of these problems is the essential unanswerability of the cardinal philosophic questions. The question is in no way rhetorical, but should be taken very literally. Every philosophy which today does not depend on the security of current intellectual and social conditions, but instead upon truth, sees itself facing the problem of a liquidation of philosophy. The sciences, particularly the logical and mathematical sciences, have set about the liquidation of philosophy with an earnestness which hardly ever existed before. This earnestness is so significant because the separate sciences, including the mathematical natural sciences, have long since rid themselves of the naturalistic conceptual apparatus that, in the 19th century, made them inferior to idealist theories of knowledge, and they have totally annexed the contents of cognitive criticism. With the help of sharpened, critical, cognitive methods, the most advanced logic—I am thinking of the new Vienna School as it proceeded from Schlick, and is now carried on by Carnap and Dubislav in close connection with Russell and the logical analysts—is attempting to

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keep all authentic, wider-reaching knowledge of experience in exclusive reserve, and tries to search for all propositions which in any way reach out beyond the circle of experience and its relativity, solely in tautologies, in analytical propositions. According to this, the Kantian question as to the constitution of *a priori* synthetic judgments would be utterly meaningless, because there is absolutely no such thing as this kind of judgment; every move beyond that which is verifiable by the power of experience is prevented; philosophy becomes solely an occasion for ordering and controlling the separate sciences, without being allowed to append anything essential from itself to their findings. Associated as complement and supplement to the ideal of such absolutely scientific philosophy—not, to be sure, for the Vienna School, but for every view which wants to defend philosophy from the claims of an exclusively scientific method—while in fact itself recognizing that this claim is a concept of philosophy as an art form, whose lack of binding force before truth is excelled only by its unfamiliarity with art and its own aesthetic inferiority. It would be better just to liquidate philosophy once and for all and dissolve it into the particular disciplines than to come to its aid with a poetic ideal which means nothing more than a poor ornamental cover for faulty thinking.

It must be said here that the thesis that all philosophic questioning in principle can be dissolved into that of the separate sciences is even today in no way so philosophically presuppositionless as it makes itself out to be. I would simply like to recall two problems which could not be mastered on the basis of this thesis. First, the problem of the meaning of the "given" itself, the fundamental category of all empiricism, which maintains the question of the accompanying subject, which in turn can only be answered historico-philosophically, because the subject of the given is not ahistorically identical and transcendental, but rather assumes changing and historically comprehensible forms. This problem is not even posed in the frame of empirio-criticism, including the most modern, but instead it naively accepts the Kantian point of departure. The other problem is familiar to it, but solved only arbitrarily and without any stringency. The problem of the unknown consciousness, the alien ego, can be made accessible for empirio-criticism only through analogy, composed subsequently on the basis of one's own experience, whereas in fact the empirio-critical method already necessarily assumes unknown consciousness in the language it has at its disposal. Solely by posing these problems, the theory of the Vienna School is drawn into precisely that philosophic continuity from which it wanted to distance itself. Yet that says nothing against the extraordinary importance of this School. I view its significance less in that it might have successfully converted philosophy into science than in that its rigorous formulation of the scientific in philosophy sharpens the contours of the contents of philosophy not subject to logic and the separate sciences. Philosophy will not be transformed into science, but under the pressure of the empiricist attack it will banish from itself all questioning which, as specifically scientific, belongs

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of right to the separate sciences and clouds philosophic questioning. I do not mean to suggest that philosophy should give up or even slacken that contact with separate sciences which it has finally regained, and the attainment of which counts among the most fortunate results of the most recent intellectual history. Quite the contrary. Philosophy will be able to understand the material content and concretion of problems only within the present standing of the separate sciences. It will also not be allowed to raise itself above such sciences by accepting their "results" as finished and meditating upon them from a safe distance. Rather, philosophic problems will lie always, and in a certain sense irredeemably, locked within the most specific questions of the separate sciences. Philosophy distinguishes itself from science not by a higher level of generality, as the banal view still today assumes, nor through the abstraction of its categories nor through the nature of its materials. The central difference lies far more in that the separate sciences accept their findings, at least their final and deepest findings, as indestructible and static, whereas philosophy perceives the first finding which it lights upon as a sign that needs unriddling. Plainly put: the idea of science (*Wissenschaft*) is research; that of philosophy is interpretation. In this remains the great, perhaps the everlasting paradox: philosophy persistently and with the claim of truth, must proceed interpretively without ever possessing a sure key to interpretation; nothing more is given to it than fleeting, disappearing traces within the riddle figures of that which exists and their astonishing entwinings. The history of philosophy is nothing other than the history of such entwinings. Thus it reaches so few "results." It must always begin anew and therefore cannot do without the least thread which earlier times have spun, and through which the lineature is perhaps completed which could transform the ciphers into a text.

It follows, then, that the idea of interpretation in no way coincides with the problem of "meaning," with which it is mostly confused. It just is not the task of philosophy to present such a meaning positively, to portray reality as "meaningful" and thereby justify it. Every such justification of that which exists is prohibited by the fragmentation in being itself. While our images of perceived reality may very well be *Gestalten*, the world in which we live is not; it is constituted differently than out of mere images of perception. The text which philosophy has to read is incomplete, contradictory and fragmentary, and much in it may be delivered up to blind demons; in fact perhaps the reading of it is our task precisely so that we, by reading, can better learn to recognize the demonic forces and to banish them. At the same time the idea of interpretation does not mean to suggest a second, a secret world which is to be opened up through an analysis of appearances. The dualism of the intelligible and the empirical, as was formulated by Kant and only from the post-Kantian perspective was attributed to Plato, whose heaven of ideas still lies undisguised and open to the mind—this dualism is better ascribed to the idea of research than that of interpretation—the idea of research, which assumes the reduction of the question to given and known elements where nothing

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would seem necessary except the answer. He who interprets by searching behind the phenomenal world for a world-in-itself (*Welt an sich*) which forms its foundation and support, acts mistakenly like someone who wants to find in the riddle the reflection of a being which lies behind it, a being mirrored in the riddle, in which it is contained. Instead, the function of riddle-solving is to light up the riddle-*Gestalt* like lightning and to negate it (*aufzuheben*), not to persist behind the riddle and imitate it. Authentic philosophic interpretation does not meet up with a fixed meaning which already lies behind the question, but lights it up suddenly and momentarily, and consumes it at the same time. Just as riddle-solving is constituted, in that the singular and dispersed elements of the question are brought into various groupings long enough for them to close together in a figure out of which the solution springs forth, while the question disappears—so philosophy has to bring its elements, which it receives from the sciences, into changing constellations, or, to say it with less astrological and scientifically more current expression, into changing trial combinations, until they fall into a figure which can be read as an answer, while at the same time the question disappears. The task of philosophy is not to search for concealed and manifest intentions of reality, but to interpret unintentional reality, in that, by the power of constructing figures, or images (*Bilder*), out of the isolated elements of reality, it negates (*aufhebt*) questions, the exact articulation of which is the task of science,[2] a task to which philosophy always remains bound, because its power of illumination is not able to catch fire otherwise than on these solid questions. Here one can discover what appears as such an astounding and strange affinity existing between interpretive philosophy and that type of thinking which most strongly rejects the concept of the intentional, the meaningful: the thinking of materialism. Interpretation of the unintentional through a juxtaposition of the analytically isolated elements and illumination of the real by the power of such interpretation is the program of every authentically materialist knowledge, a program to which the materialist procedure does all the more justice, the more it distances itself from every "meaning" of its objects and the less it relates itself to an implicit, quasi-religious meaning. For long ago, interpretation divorced itself from all questions of meaning or, in other words, the symbols of philosophy are decayed. If philosophy must learn to renounce the question of totality, then it implies that it must learn to do without the symbolic function, in which for a long time, at least in idealism, the particular appeared to represent the general. It must give up the great problems, the size of which once hoped to guarantee the totality, whereas today between the wide meshes of big questions, interpretation slips away. If true interpretation succeeds only through a juxtaposition of the smallest elements, then it no longer has a role in the great problems in the traditional sense, or only in the sense that it deposits within a concrete finding the total question which that finding previously seemed to represent symbolically.

2. Cf. Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 9-44, especially pp. 21 and 23.

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Construction out of small and unintentional elements thus counts among the basic assumptions of philosophic interpretation; turning to the "refuse of the physical world" (*Abhub der Erscheinungswelt*) which Freud proclaimed, has validity beyond the realm of psychoanalysis, just as the turning of progressive social philosophy to economics has validity not merely due to the empirical superiority of economics, but just as much because of the immanent requirements of philosophic interpretation itself. Should philosophy today ask about the absolute relationship between the thing-in-itself and appearance, or, to grasp a more current formulation, about simply the meaning of being, it would either remain formal and unbinding, or it would split itself into a multitude of possible and arbitrary world-view positions (*weltanschaulicher Standpunkte*).

Suppose, however—I give an example as a thought experiment, without suggesting its actual feasibility—suppose it were possible to group the elements of a social analysis in such a manner that the way they came together made a figure which certainly does not lie before us organically, but which must first be posited: the commodity structure. This would hardly solve the thing-in-itself problem, not even in the sense that somehow the social conditions might be revealed under which the thing-in-itself problem came into existence, as Lukács even thought the solution to be;[3] for the truth content of a problem is in principle different from the historical and psychological conditions out of which it grows. But it might be possible that, from a sufficient construction of the commodity structure, the thing-in-itself problem absolutely disappeared. Like a source of light, the historical figure of commodity and of exchange value may free the form of a reality, the hidden meaning of which remained closed to investigation of the thing-in-itself problem, because there is no hidden meaning which could be redeemable from its one-time and first-time historical appearance. I don't want to give any material statements here, but only point out the direction for what I perceive as the tasks of philosophic interpretation. But even simply the correct formulation of these tasks would establish several things concerning those questions of philosophic principle, the explicit expression of which I would like to avoid. Namely this: that the function which the traditional philosophic inquiry expected from meta-historical, symbolically meaningful ideas is accomplished by inner-historically constituted, non-symbolic ones. With this, however, the relationship between ontology and history would also be differently posited, in principle, without thereby allowing the device of ontologizing history as totality in the form of mere "historicity," whereby every specific tension between interpretation and the object would be lost, and merely a masked historicism would remain. Instead of this, according to my conception, history would no more be the place from which ideas arise, stand out independently and disappear again. On the contrary, the historical images (*geschichtliche Bilder*) would at the same time be themselves ideas, the configuration of which constituted unintentional truth (*intentionslose*

3. Cf. Georg Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (1923).

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*Wahrheit*), rather than that truth appeared in history as intention.

But I break off the thought here: for nowhere are general statements more questionable than in a philosophy which wants to exclude abstract and general statements and requires them only in the necessity of transition. Instead, I would like to point out a second essential connection between interpretive philosophy and materialism. I said that the riddle's answer was not the "meaning" of the riddle in the sense that both could exist at the same time. The answer was contained within the riddle, and the riddle portrayed only its own appearance and contained the answer within itself as intention. Far more, the answer stands in strict antithesis to the riddle, needs to be constructed out of the riddle's elements, and destroys the riddle, which is not meaningful, but meaningless, as soon as the answer is decisively given to it. The movement which occurs in this process is executed in earnestness by materialism. Earnestness means here that the answer does not remain mistakenly in the closed area of knowledge, but that praxis is granted to it. The interpretation of given reality and its abolition are connected to each other, not, of course, in the sense that reality is negated in the concept, but that out of the construction of a configuration of reality the demand for its [reality's] real change always follows promptly. The change-causing gesture of the riddle process—not its mere resolution as such—provides the image of resolutions to which materialist praxis alone has access. Materialism has named this relationship with a name that is philosophically certified: dialectic. Only dialectically, it seems to me, is philosophic interpretation possible. When Marx reproached the philosophers, saying that they had only variously interpreted the world, and contraposed to them that the point was to change it, then the sentence receives its legitimacy not only out of political praxis, but also out of philosophic theory. Only in the annihilation of the question is the authenticity of philosophic interpretation first successfully proven, and mere thought by itself cannot accomplish this [authenticity]: therefore the annihilation of the question compels praxis. It is superfluous to separate out explicitly a conception of pragmatism, in which theory and praxis entwine with each other as they do in the dialectic.

I am clearly conscious of the impossibility of developing the program which I presented you—an impossibility which stems not only from the limits of time, but exists generally, because precisely as a program it does not allow itself to be worked out in completeness and generality. Nevertheless, I clearly see it as my duty to give you several suggestions. First: the idea of philosophic interpretation does not shrink back from that liquidation of philosophy which to me seems signalled by the collapse of the last philosophic claims to totality. For the strict exclusion of all ontological questions in the traditional sense, the avoidance of invariant general concepts, also perhaps the concept of man, the exclusion of every conception of a self-sufficient totality of mind (*Geist*), or of a self-contained "history of mind"; the concentration of philosophic questions on concrete inner-historical complexes from which they are not to be detached—these postulates indeed become extremely similar to a dissolution

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of that which has long been called philosophy. Whereas (at least the official) contemporary philosophic thinking has long kept its distance from these demands, or in any case has attempted to assimilate them singly in a watered-down form, one of the first and most actual tasks would appear to be the radical criticism of the ruling philosophic thinking. I am not afraid of the reproach of unfruitful negativity—an expression which Gottfried Keller once characterized as a "gingerbread expression" (*Pfefferkuchenausdruck*). If philosophic interpretation can in fact only prosper dialectically, then the first dialectical point of attack is given by a philosophy which cultivates precisely those problems whose removal appears more pressingly necessary than the addition of a new answer to so many old ones. Only an essentially undialectical philosophy, one which aims at ahistorical truth, could maintain that the old problems could simply be removed by forgetting them and starting fresh from the beginning. In fact, the deception of beginning is precisely that which in Heidegger's philosophy comes under criticism first of all. Only in the strictest dialectical communication with the most recent solution-attempts of philosophy and of philosophic terminology can a real change in philosophic consciousness prevail. This communication will have to take its specific scientific material preponderantly from sociology and, as the interpretive grouping process demands, crystalize out the small, unintentional elements which are nonetheless still bound to philosophic material.

One of the most powerful academic philosophers of the present [Heidegger] is said to have answered the question of the relationship between philosophy and sociology somewhat like this: while the philosopher is like an architect who presents and develops the blueprint of a house, the sociologist is like the cat burglar who climbs the walls from outside and takes out what he can reach. I would be inclined to acknowledge the comparison and to interpret positively the function he gave sociology for philosophy. For the house, this big house, has long since decayed in its foundations and threatens not only to destroy all those inside it, but to cause all the things to vanish which are stored within it, much of which is irreplaceable. If the cat burglar steals these things, these singular, indeed often half-forgotten things, he does a good deed, provided that they are only rescued; he will scarcely hold onto them for long, since they are for him only of scant worth. Of course, the appreciation of sociology by philosophic interpretation requires some limitations. The point of interpretive philosophy is to construct keys, before which reality springs open. As to the size of the key categories, they are specially made to order. The old idealism chose categories too large; so they did not even come close to fitting the keyhole. Pure philosophic sociologism chooses them too small; the key indeed goes in, but the door doesn't open. A great number of sociologists carry nominalism so far that the concepts become too small to align the others with themselves, to enter with them into a constellation. What remains is a vast, inconsistent connection of simple this-here determinations, which scoffs at every cognitive ordering and in no way provides a

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critical criterion. Thus, for example, the concept of class is nullified and replaced by countless descriptions of separate groups so that they can no longer be arranged into overlapping unities, although they in fact appear as such in empirical reality. Similarly, one of the most important concepts, that of ideology,[4] is robbed of its cutting edge by defining it formally as the arrangement of contents of consciousness in regard to particular groups, without allowing the question to arise any longer as to the truth or falsity of the contents themselves. This sociology classifies itself as a kind of general relativism, the generality of which can be no more recognized by philosophic interpretation than can any other generality, and for the correction of which philosophy possesses a sufficient means in the dialectical method.

In regard to the manipulation of conceptual material by philosophy, I speak purposely of grouping and trial arrangement, of constellation and construction. The historical images, which do not constitute the meaning of being (*Dasein*) but dissolve and resolve its questions are not simply self-given. They do not lie organically ready in history; not showing (*Schau* [Husserl]) or intuition is required to become aware of them. They are not magically sent by the gods to be taken in and venerated. Rather, they must be produced by human beings and are legitimated in the last analysis alone by the fact that reality crystalizes about them in striking conclusiveness (*Evidenz* [Husserl]). Here they divorce themselves centrally from the archaic, the mythic archetypes (*Urbilder*) which psychoanalysis lights upon, and which [Ludwig] Klages hopes to preserve as categories of our knowledge. Should they be equivalent to them in a hundred characteristics, they separate themselves at the point where those [archetypes] describe their fatalistic orbit in the heads of human beings. The historical images are manageable and comprehensible, instruments of human reason, even there where they seem to align themselves objectively, as magnetic centers of objective being. They are models, by means of which the *ratio*, examining and testing, approaches a reality which refuses to submit to laws, yet can imitate the pattern of the model every time, provided that pattern is imprinted correctly. One may see here an attempt to re-establish that old concept of philosophy which was formulated by Bacon and passionately contended around the time of Leibniz, a conception which idealism derided as a fad: that of the *ars inveniendi* [art of invention]. Every other conception of models would be gnostic and indefensible. But the *organon* of this *ars inveniendi* is fantasy. An exact fantasy; fantasy which abides strictly within the material which the sciences present to it, and reaches beyond them only in the smallest aspects of their arrangement: aspects, granted, which fantasy itself must originally generate. If the idea of philosophic interpretation which I tried to develop for you is valid, then it can be expressed as the demand to answer the questions of a pre-given reality each time, through a fantasy which rearranges the elements of the question without going beyond the circumference of the elements, the exactitude of which has its control in the disappearance of the question.

4. Adorno is referring to Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (1929).

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I know full well that many, perhaps most of you are not in agreement with what I am presenting here. Not only scientific thinking but, still more, fundamental ontology contradicts my conviction as to the current tasks of philosophy. But thinking which aims at relations with the object, and not at validity isolated in itself, is accustomed to prove its right to exist not by refuting the objections which are voiced against it and which consider themselves irrefutable, but by its fruitfulness, in the sense in which Goethe used the term. Nonetheless, may I still perhaps address a word to the most current objections, not as I have construed them, but as the representatives of fundamental ontology formulate them, and as they first led me to formulate the theory according to which, up until then, I had proceeded solely in the praxis of philosophic interpretation.

The central objection is that my conception, too, is based on a concept of man, a blueprint of Being (*Entwurf des Daseins*); only, out of blind anxiety before the power of history, I allegedly shrank from putting these invariants forth clearly and left them clouded; instead I bestowed upon historical facticity, or its arrangement, the power which actually belongs to the invariant, ontological first principles, practiced idolatry with historically produced being, destroyed in philosophy every permanent standard, sublimated it into an aesthetic picture game (*Bilderspiel*), and transformed the *prima philosophia* [philosophy of first principles] into essayism.

In response, I can relate to these objections only by admitting of their content, but I defend it as philosophically legitimate. I will not decide whether a particular conception of man and being lies at the base of my theory, but I do deny the necessity of resorting to this conception. It is an idealist demand, that of an absolute beginning, as only pure thought by itself can accomplish. It is a Cartesian demand, which believes it necessary to raise thinking to the form of its thought presuppositions and axioms. However, philosophy which no longer makes the assumption of autonomy, which no longer believes reality to be grounded in the *ratio*, but instead assumes always and forever that the law-giving of autonomous reason pierces through a being which is not adequate to it and cannot be laid out rationally as a totality—such a philosophy will not go the entire path to the rational presuppositions, but instead will stop there where irreducible reality breaks in upon it. If it proceeds further into the region of presuppositions, then it will be able to reach them only formally, and at the price of that reality in which its actual tasks are laid. The break-in of what is irreducible, however, occurs concrete-historically and thus it is history which retards the movement of thought to its presuppositions. The productivity of thinking is able to prove itself only dialectically, in historical concreteness. Both thought and history come into communication within the models. Regarding efforts to achieve a form for such communication, I gladly put up with the reproach of essayism. The English empiricists called their philosophic writings essays, as did Leibniz, because the power of freshly disclosed reality, upon which their thinking struck, continuously forced upon them the risk of experimentation. Not until

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the post-Kantian century was the risk of experimentation lost, along with the power of reality. Thus from a form of great philosophy the essay became an insignificant form of aesthetics, in which a concretion of interpretation nonetheless takes refuge as appearance (*Schein*), over which authentic philosophy, in the grand dimensions of its problems, has long since lost disposal.

If, with the disintegration of all security within great philosophy, experiment makes its entry; if it thereby ties onto the limited, contoured and unsymbolic interpretations of aesthetic essays, then that does not appear to be condemnable, provided that the objects are chosen correctly, that they are real. For the mind (*Geist*) is indeed not capable of producing or grasping the totality of the real, but it may be possible to penetrate the detail, to explode in miniature the mass of merely existing reality.

**Working Papers in Cultural Studies 10**

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# ON THE NEW ADVENTURES OF THE DIALECTIC*

## by Agnes Heller

Though qualitatively different, Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason,* Lukács' *Ontology,* Adorno's *Negative Dialectics,* and Kosik's *Dialectics of the Concrete* are equally important attempts to formulate the new adventures of the dialectic. In terms of their scope, Lukács' and Sartre's works are most similar. Both attempt to reconstitute a comprehensive philosophical system. Kosik's and Adorno's works are rather collections of closely related essays devoted to the formulation of problems. This difference turns up in matters of style, also. The slow-moving sentences of the first two authors contrast sharply with Adorno's and Kosik's more insightful, pointed and "quotable" statements. But there is a striking similarity between Lukács' and Kosik's works, when viewed from the perspective of the antinomy of "naivete" and "reflexivity."

The *Ontology* as well as the *Dialectics of the Concrete* are "naive" books. Both rely on their perception of the "thing itself" and allow their ideas to float in a clear and unrestrained manner, thus leaving their methods unthematized. *Negative Dialectics,* on the other hand, is the extreme counterpoint. Self-reflective thought has assumed such a central function that the "thing itself" (to be grasped, according to Kosik, through the dialectic) is present, if at all, in pieces.

This identity and difference—to use dialectical terminology—results from the specific context within which the universality of philosophy obtains. Thus, universality of philosophy is expressed in the simultaneity of projects and in the almost full correspondence of thematized problems. The difference in the *attitudes* of the four authors has to be sought in the circumstances under which their works were written—in the Western European roots of Adorno and Sartre and in the Eastern European climate of Lukács and Kosik.

The Western European dialectic is confronted by sophisticated philosophical edifices. It is, of course, impossible to simply ignore these constructions and allow ideas to float free of them. One must accept the challenge of methodology and reflection, if only to justify one's own authenticity. Nor is this the case only for those thinkers who are taking their first tentative steps in the realm of ideas to be refuted. It applies also to those who were never close to *Existentialontologie* or positivism.

By contrast, Eastern European philosophy confronted an extremely simplified thought, a litany of dogmatized tenets. Questioning these tenets was thus the prerequisite for emancipating thought. The turn toward a philosophy of essence implied probing the limits of one's own independent thinking. The return to Marx as the 'source' and the unbiased analysis of the problems presumed an unshakeable naivete. The emphasis was on seeing

*Translated by W.A. Szemberg.

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what the text meant. Only in this way can we understand the daring sentences which Kosik, reminiscent of old philosophers, places at the beginning and end of his book: "Dialectics is after the 'thing itself;' but the 'thing itself' is man and his place in the universe or, in different words: it is the totality of the world uncovered in history by man, and man existing in the totality of the world."[1]

The intervening two decades since the start of the dialectic's new adventures undoubtedly justifies the appeal against Kosik's seductive and naive approach. And yet, philosophical thought, and especially the Marxist tradition, has been enriched by Kosik's grasping for the "thing itself." By means of his naivete, Kosik questions the grounds beneath overly sophisticated reflexivity. His belief in the "renaissance of Marxism" awakened a similar belief in others. His concerns address the present and the future insofar as the questions that he explicated are still today's pressing issues. The simple fact that these questions can be posed is itself exemplary. Where concern for methodological reflexivity is about to let go of the "thing itself," to inquire about the "thing itself" is a revelation. Such an act is refreshing even when the formulation of such questions only leads to other ones.

But apart from the stylistic affinity of the *Dialectics of the Concrete* and *Negative Dialectics*, there is another deeper similarity. The structure and the arrangement of the two books, written at the same time, coincide to such an extent that one has to be amazed at the fact that neither author could have read the other's writings. Both start with a critique of Heidegger. Both describe the world of Heidegger's *Being and Time* as a reflection of pseudo-concreteness. Another common characteristic is their preference for conceptual models as opposed to a system-oriented thought.[2] Both emphasize the theory of fetishism in the Marxian tradition. Even the themes they elaborate are the same—e.g., the critique of rationalism and instrumental reason, the transcendence of philosophy, the relation between theory and praxis, freedom and especially the problem of history. Ultimately both pose the question: what is man?

But the perplexing correspondence of the structures of both books further highlights the difference of their approaches and conflicting *attitudes*: Adorno's *despair*, and Kosik's *trust*. For Adorno, Auschwitz is the metaphor of the past; the future contains the possibility of total catastrophe. Those who survived Auschwitz carry the guilt of having survived. And it is this guilt that forces us to philosophize. Compared to the possibility of a total calamity, reification becomes a mere epiphenomenon. Thus, philosophy has nothing to do but to continue to decipher the hieroglyphic handwriting on the wall. In *Dialectics of the Concrete* by contrast, there is neither the Auschwitz metaphor nor the vision of total calamity. Nor does Kosik provide a criterion according to which reification can be seen as an epiphenomen. What does matter is the

1. K. Kosik, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, trans. by Karel Kovanda and James Schmidt (Dordrecht and Boston, 1977), pp. 1, 152-153.

2. The difference, however, is that, while Adorno accomplishes it through a polemic with the system, Kosik's thought on the subject of the methodology of model-theorizing is not polemical.

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exposure of that false concreteness which characterizes fetishized everyday life. This is partly revealed through "existential metamorphosis," i.e., a change in one's relation to the world, but it is accomplished primarily through revolutionary praxis. For Kosik, the meaning of history consists in the constitution of man and humanity. The task of philosophy is to grasp the totality of human reality and to reveal the truth of that reality. This is why philosophy is so indispensable.

This apparent difference of attitude should not, however, be reduced to Adorno's and Kosik's different personal worldviews. We can assume that for Kosik, the catastrophic past (as a personal experience) and the calamity of the future (as possibility) are of no less significance than they were for Adorno. Yet, Adorno's philosophy is constituted through this experience, while Kosik's is not. Here Kosik represents the *philosophical* attitude par excellence. Although Adorno was spellbound by his experience, we nonetheless can recognize it as being more than justified. And yet, despair has no philosophy. To decipher the writing on the wall out of bits and pieces is the task of a prophet and not a philosopher. Whenever such a task is framed in a philosophical attitude, the prophesy destroys the philosophy. Nevertheless, a motif of hope manages to shine through at the end of Adorno's book, in the same way that it appears in the poetic lamentation of Mann's Leverkühn.

Objectifications make demands and place limits, so that what is possible in a work of art is inadmissible for philosophy. In a fragmented world one can and ought to *invoke* the notion of totality, though not necessarily in the Hegelian sense. Kosik's work is characteristic of such a philosophical attitude. The question of possibility is put aside, while the world of "essence" is the world of "ought." He constitutes his philosophy from the perspective of an unequivocally positive future to be rationally shaped by man. These are the reasons why Adorno's dialectic is *negative*, while negativity in Kosik is only a *moment*.

Adorno's attitude is anything but frivolous. And yet, it seems to us that there is some wavering within the formulation of that attitude. In fact, its point of departure, according to which Marxist philosophy is seen to have missed its moment of realization, is already frivolous. To be sure, this is not the kind of vulgar wavering that Kosik criticizes for believing that philosophy has already been realized. But however sophisticated it may be, Adorno's attitude remains frivolous. Such an approach marks the point beyond which the philosopher who attempts to read the writing on the wall—or any person for that matter, however consistent a thinker they may be—is not allowed to cross over, i.e. the point which located one *outside* of the universe.

What gives the philosopher the power to determine the moment when theory was to be realized or, conversely, the moment when theory failed to be realized? The prophet receives his authority from God. He is justified in pronouncing his knowledge which is hidden from other human beings insofar as God revealed himself to the prophet alone. But if the defetishization of fetishized consciousness is itself judged to be an expression of fetishism, then

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we can justifiably ask the question: what God enabled this self-proclaimed judge to stand above other human beings and outside of the world, so that he can pass a verdict on the consciousness of others and find them guilty of "fetishism?" Adorno criticizes (and justly so) all forms of the sociology of knowledge—especially Lukács' and Mannheim's—for its attempt to postulate *the* truth as grounded in a relative truth corresponding to a socially contingent, particular consciousness. And yet, there is no truth sought and constituted outside of human consciousness. To postulate absolute truth while depicting contemporary consciousness as wholly and irrevocably fetishized can only be viewed as disdainful of all human struggles and hopes. What gives Adorno the right to such arrogance?

Against this sort of hyper-reflective thinking, Kosik's belief undoubtedly appears all the more naive. "Man is not walled in by the subjectivity of his race, socialness, or subjective projects, in which he would merely define himself in different ways. Rather, through his being, i.e. through praxis, he has the ability to transcend his subjectivity and to get to know things as they are."[3] Of course, such a declaration can be challenged in a variety of ways, but one thing remains certain: it expresses and articulates an essential philosophical attitude. In other words, it recognizes "man" as authentic and thereby bestows authenticity to all humanity, enabling it to engage in conflicts here and now, to solve its problems and thus to defetishize fetishism—to know the "thing itself." Kosik the philosopher posits himself as *one* human being within the ideal community of active and reflecting humanity.

The *critique of ideology* in Kosik's work is the thread along which he formulates his problems. This focus on the critique of ideology is again a motif which relates the *Dialectics of the Concrete* to the Frankfurt School and especially to Adorno. Such a critique always has a double function; it is partly a refutation of a body of thought, system, or methodology, and partly a critique of societies, social structures, and lifestyles that find their expression and justification within ideologies.

But Kosik adds to this a third moment which clearly highlights his courageous thought. He does not treat ideologies as purely false consciousness, and thus does not stop after "exposing" their "falsity." Not only would he destroy all such ideological constructions, but he would simultaneously analyze the problems that gave rise to those ideological forms. Nor should one assume that ideological forms are merely a function of *false* problems. A critique of ideologies can only be effective when it repeatedly reflects on the same facts of life that ideologies reflect, or when it counters a certain set of solutions with alternative proposals.

Kosik, therefore, follows his critique of Heidegger's notion of pseudo-concreteness with an analysis of everydayness. Similarly, a critique of Heidegger's explication of the notions of anxiety and care is followed by a Marxist interpretation of the same concepts. Owing to this, Kosik does not

3. *Dialectics of the Concrete, op. cit.*, p. 152.

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stop with the refutation of reductionism; he confronts the latter with the methodology of the unfolding of the concrete totality of facts. The same reasons prevent Kosik from being satisfied with the discussion of the inadequacy of instrumental rationality. Hence, he goes so far as to confront the category of rationalistic reason with the category of dialectical reason. It is not enough for him to refute the idea of praxis as a testing ground for theory; he goes further, setting it against an extensive and comprehensive concept of social praxis. It is not a question as to which solution we find more reassuring or towards which we might have objections. What is more important is that the proposed alternative solutions of problems are appropriate to give back to philosophy (and especially to Marxist philosophy) a sense of confidence. This is what makes Kosik's work a significant one.

Philosophical critique since the time of Socrates has always presupposed "some other" viewpoint. But before it can question a body of thought, a critical philosophy has to be embedded in a knowledge which will allow it to suggest alternative proposals to confront the problems it challenges. A pure critical philosophy does not exist. Therefore, the *attitude* of the *Dialectics of the Concrete* is exemplary.

The book is a veritable cornucopia of posited problems and attempted solutions, characterized by a host of essential and decisive questions. Even that which is only touched upon or hinted at in the book could itself be the subject of whole new volumes. What follows, however, is a brief discussion of only one of those themes: the philosophy of history.

Kosik's reflections on the subject of history are marked, as is every other philosophical proposition, by the critique of an antipodal view that is especially cutting in reference to the cardinal problem of history: historicism versus the concept of rational history that is Hegelian or at least derived from Hegel. Historicism is a paradigm of approximation which is at variance with or even excludes a philosophy of history. Here, all historical structures are seen as unique; the only relation between them is one of synchrony or diachrony. While this allows for a science of history, it doesn't allow for a philosophy of history, owing to the inability of historicism to make generalizations. Subsequently, the dialectic of genesis and validity appears to be insoluble. Kosik demonstrates this by pointing to the problem of understanding art: how and why does a work of art survive the historical conditions in which it was created? If it were to be analyzed in the context of its unique and unrepeatedly historical framework—as historicism would have it—then we would not be able to say anything about its present validity. Thus, the philosophical concept of history is necessary in order to understand a type of objectification whose validity transcends an historical epoch. Transhistorical validity, which does *exist*, is incomprehensible unless one can assert some idea of relative continuity and generality.

On the other hand, the Hegelian world spirit and theories associated with it were intended, according to Kosik, to construct a cosmology out of the chaos of individual actions and structures. Some kind of providence motivates and guarantees the rationality of history while, at the same time, being its

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teleology. Humanity becomes a mere instrument of history. Kosik points to the moral implications of such a view, according to which, for example, a person who kills in the name of history (on behalf, that is, of some doubtful "higher purpose") would not be considered a murderer. Every sacrifice and crime—indeed, every kind of evil—becomes a negligible concomitant symptom, that is justified by the providential rationality of history.

Against these two conceptions Kosik proposes a third. The mystifying Hegelian concept of history acting on its own is countered its "inversion:" it is not history which acts through men, but active men who constitute history, who *are* history. In itself this is no more than a declaration. Kosik, however, further elaborates this problem in the rough outline of a theory of objectification.

Central to this theory is the notion of labor as an objective activity. (Labor is regarded here, of course, as a philosophical category, with the economic notion of work as one of its moments.) The objectified praxis of humanity (culture, civilization) that confronts humankind in a given historical period is the historically achieved reason of society. But it exists only through the reason of the human beings of this particular period insofar as they use, understand and apply such objectifications, thereby simultaneously interpreting and constituting their meaning. And through such explication of objectifications, humanity explicates itself. Such a conception of history contains both implicitly and explicitly a theory of development whose measure is the *totalization* of objectifications. Today, of course, we totalize a greater and more diverse amount of objectifications than did primitive society or societies in the Middle Ages. The development of knowledge itself is subject to dialectical totalization and thus carries within itself the potential for revision. Hence, for Kosik, all questioning of the theory of progress is viewed as romantic.

Kosik's choice of conceiving the theory of objectification in the framework of the philosophy of history proved extremely fruitful. Of course, he was not alone in accomplishing this task, even though he could have known nothing about similar attempts. But this in no way detracts from his work. Rather, it is further proof of his philosophical acuity. Perhaps the first attempt along these lines was the first chapter of Lukács' *Aesthetik*. György Markus's work on *Marxismus und Anthropologie* belongs to the same tendency. The fact that various tendencies are led independently to develop similar solutions indicates the sterility of other approaches and the social relevance of the new one.

Of course, many aspects of Kosik's proposals can be questioned. For example, the use of the degree of totalization of objectifications as a measure of development is thoroughly dubious. Or, more specifically, the theory of objectifications does not warrant the conclusions Kosik draws. Referring again to Kosik's example of art: there most certainly has been in this century a process of totalization in relation to works of art. Art of all periods is readily accessible to the modern connoisseur, for whom a Greek or Oceanic sculpture, a painting by Piero della Francesca or Picasso is equally beautiful.

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But if one looks at the problem in light of the role that high culture plays in the everyday lives of the overwhelming majority of people, then it would be necessary to regard 15th-century Florence as significantly more progressive than our world today, even though the Florentines of that time had no knowledge of Oceanic art nor attached any value to early Gothic sculpture. Theoretically, these art forms were not received, they were not totalized into the Florentine world. Thus, while the totalization of objectifications creates the possibility of a higher level of development in the everyday life and praxis of each individual, the possibility is unfortunately not the reality.

A gap is to be found, then, in Kosik's concept of the philosophy of history: namely, its *lack* of the category alienation. It has already been pointed out that one of the similarities between Adorno and Kosik lies in their focus on Marx's theory of fetishism. The Marxian theory of alienation, however, plays only a subordinate role and is understood as synonymous with reification.

To understand this more fully, it is necessary to return to Kosik's critique of Hegel. Given Marx's statement that history does not "do" anything, while everything within it is made by man, one must therefore, according to Kosik, analyze the reasons why history becomes mystified. "History is a product of mankind. But why do people over and over again act *as though* they were the agents or trustees of this product?"[4] This question is certainly one of the *fundamental questions* of the philosophy of history. But consider the terminology. The idea that mankind does not make history but rather only endures it as the instrument of a higher order, is regarded as mere "mystification." Human beings, that is, *feel* as though they are mere agents or trustees. The thought that history happens *to* people and that it is not people who make history becomes formulated only as an expression of fetishized consciousness. In his search for the source of this mystification, Kosik arrives at the idea that the individual, while engaging in action, grounds and justifies his activity by conceiving it to be part of the design of a higher order (World Spirit, God, Law). In such a way the individual attempts to generate the courage for such activity. But whether or not this explanation sufficiently accounts for this form of consciousness seems to be more than problematic.

The fact that history is made by man does not imply that *each individual* "makes" history *at all times,* nor does it imply that history is "made" by all to an equal extent. But let us put aside, for the time being, questions regarding history's existence or creators. These questions are only meaningful from the perspective of periods having historical consciousness.

In retrospect, what appears to us today as history-making was regarded, until the end of the 18th century, from the perspective of an active creation of institutions, laws, conventions of the existing "world order." Does this mean that all people have participated to the same extent in the creation and reconstitution of particular laws, institutions, conventions, events—in short, the existing world order? In all civilized societies there were those who wielded power and those excluded from it; there were people who decided on the fate

4. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

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of humanity and those who never had any say. The latter ones were always justified in feeling that they were not the creators of history, and that, on the contrary, everything happened to them. In objecting to this view one could claim, of course, that it is another instance of fetishized consciousness: after all, the pyramids were built by slaves and not by Pharaohs. It is the slaves, they say, who "made" history. But it would be more reasonable to object on the grounds that material wealth is always produced by those "on the bottom," which makes them the genuine creators of history even though they may not be aware of it. But let us assume that each producer is aware that, thanks to his production, he constitutes the society. Will this change in any way the fact that history will continue to act upon him?

Making history, therefore, does not simply mean creating objectifications, but also to exercise control over them, i.e., to actively participate in the creation of circumstances, conditions, social regulations, laws and events within which social wealth is produced. Conceived in this way, history is not made by men, but only by *some men.* The majority of human beings have the feeling of being mere means through which history acts not only by virtue of some false consciousness, but because *history has actually used them.*

Why, then, was the false consciousness of "fate," "World Spirit," "God" or "lawfulness" necessary for the powerful, for those politicians and others who created and guarded the worldly state of affairs? In the chapter on "Master and Slave" in the *Phenomenology,* Hegel gives a superb account. The Master's evident inability to totalize is a result of the division of labor, which excludes him from the reproduction of social wealth. Hence, he does not "make" history, it only "happens" to him. Marx presented this very clearly through the relationship between the capitalist and the worker. Both are alienated, but while the worker experiences this alienation negatively, the capitalist enjoys it. Thus, fetishized consciousness is by no means the consequence of the individual's attempt to ground and justify his activities. It is rather a result of the fact that men have themselves created the conditions which actually stand over and against the individual, classes, and peoples as semi-transcendent powers.

Just how much this is so can be seen in those few historical moments when each member of a civilized society has the opportunity to determine the conditions of society. For example, the short period of Athenian history between the reforms of Cleisthenes and the downfall of Pericles was marked by a disappearance of destiny-determining categories. It was said in Athens that the "thesis"—the law—is a human creation. Democritus maintained that nothing was steered by fate and that everything is governed by penetrating reason. Thus, as soon as each member of a society has an equal say in determining collective destiny, it will no longer be necessary for the individual to appeal to "fate" or to the "will of the Gods" to justify his actions.

*Dialectics of the Concrete* constructs history from the viewpoint of communist society. A different philosophy of history would not be possible today, unless one chooses to negate the philosophy of history altogether. Kosik

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does not conceive of communism as a fixed state of affairs, but as an historical activity of freedom through which man would rationally shape history. This also implies an emancipation from the yoke of the economy.

Ultimately, history becomes meaningful only if we constitute it from the perspective of intentionality (the future). At times, Kosik wavers between bestowing to the concept of history a naturalist or a teleological content. With regard to the former, Kosik states that history has always existed regardless of people's knowledge of it. Alternatively, the teleological content of the concept of history is seen by Kosik in the prospects for a rational future. "Wavering" is perhaps not the best expression, since ultimately Kosik attempts to *synthesize* these two conceptions—and it is this attempt that is decisive. In it he sets forth a task for us which, from the perspective of Marxist philosophy, is of paramount importance. Just how innovative *Dialectics of the Concrete* is can be seen in the fact that no Marxist since Kosik has tried to solve this crucial problem.

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# NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN TRANSITION

### by Karel Kovanda

This year might yet turn out to be the watershed of the decade in the political life of Czechoslovakia. The Charter 77 civil rights movement signals a new period in post-invasion developments. Things will never be the same again.

In April 1969, Gustav Husak ascended to power by donning the mantle of the Communist Party's First Secretary. Alexander Dubcek was shunted to the first of a series of increasingly meaningless positions, a demotion from which he never politically recovered. Husak was determined to deliver where Dubcek didn't: to fill the military occupation with appropriate political stuffing, to undo all the achievements of the Prague Spring.

In a matter of weeks and months, this "normalization" process was well under way. Various organizations that had served as the institutional platform for reform thought were either abolished outright or an internal coup was engineered against their leadership. Censorship was reimposed and the most outspoken periodicals were banned altogether. Reforms in progress were frozen and then dismantled.

The major problem for Husak's leadership was that of the Communist Party. During 1968, the party had to an astonishing degree become a Dubcek party. Communists supported the various Prague Spring policies only slightly more than the population at large did. Consequently, the party enjoyed unprecedented prestige and popularity.[1] The segment of party members who had actively opposed Dubcek was very small, not more than 3-5 percent. Husak thus faced the tremendous task of turning this democratically-minded party around, to swing it into supporting his own, anti-Dubcek policies.

To accomplish this switch, the leadership chose the method of a purge. Every single party member's activity during 1968 was scrutinized, and leaders were separated from followers. Most of the leaders were expelled. Followers faced the local version of the loyalty oath: they were to declare that the invasion had been justified and that they themselves had been hoodwinked. Otherwise, they were expelled too, or struck off the party lists. (There is, by the way, no provision for voluntarily resigning from the party.) As a consequence of the purge, the party lost about half a million members, almost a third of its total membership. Its composition changed, too, further decreasing the already rather low percentage of working class membership.

After the 1956 Hungarian revolution, Janos Kadar chose a different method to shape the party to his liking: the old Communist Party was dissolved and a brand new organization—the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party—was founded. The differences between purging an existing party and founding a new one are important but have not been sufficiently examined. Husak, as a consequence of his approach, ended up with two problems: the problem of those expelled and that of those retained.

Expelled was the cream of the party. And along with their party card, they all too frequently lost their jobs or their positions. Many thousands were ousted from the party bureaucracy and ended up in the ranks of the working class. With a degree of cynicism, one might consider that a not unappropriate turn of fortune. However, the very search for a job—any job—was extremely painful, economically taxing and

1. See, e.g., Jaroslaw Piekalkiewicz, *Public Opinion Polling in Czechoslovakia, 1968-69* (New York, 1972).

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unbearably frustrating. The moment the personnel office learned whom they would be hiring, the job disappeared. The shared experience of being purged further strengthened the bonds that linked together the participants in the Prague Spring. They amounted to a veritable "party of the expelled," and turned into a constant source of embarassment and opposition.

The problem of those retained in the party was different. They included several categories of people: those who were active in the Dubcek leadership of 1968 and who managed to change their coats with the requisite speed, at the right time, and when nobody was looking. If successfully accomplished, former disguises were conveniently forgotten. Gustav Husak and his No. 2 man, Lubomir Strougal, the Czechoslovak Premier, both belong to this category.[2] (Other leaders of the Dubcek era, e.g., ex-Premier Oldrich Cernik and ex-ideological secretary Cestmir Cisar made a strenuous effort to join them but failed.) This group is composed of committed (and consummate) career opportunists; and it is precisely this group that controls most power positions.

The next group consists of ideological die-hard extremists. Many have extremely close ties with the Soviet Union or indeed directly with the KGB. Some are relics from the Novotny era of benevolent neo-Stalinism against which the Prague Spring had been directed. it is important to note, however, that freezing the Prague Spring did not mean an automatic comeback for Novotny's people. Only a very few of them made any comeback whatever, and virtually none resumed any power.

Yet precisely these ideological die-hards, the 3-5 percent of Dubcek's active opponents, constituted the "healthy kernel" which spearheaded the purge of the party and the coups in every other organization in the country. They amounted to something of a "lunatic fringe," but it was precisely this group of people around which Husak had to pivot the party into the new, "normalized" direction.

Kadar did not admit the liberals into his new party—but he also managed to keep out the arch-conservatives. Husak didn't have that option. After the purge, the die-hards became the ideological beacon of the rump party, and a constant contender for power. To deflect their aspirations, Husak willy-nilly had to champion their cause. In due course, the distinction between his opportunism and their orthodoxy became less and less visible. Husak's leadership ended up captive of the "ultras."

And the third group in the party: most of the rank-and-file members, the poor devils who for reasons of elementary personal and family security felt compelled to violate their conscience and to declare the Soviet army as the savior.

The opposition might have been expurgated but it was not eliminated. Aside from the "party of the expelled," i.e., the Prague Spring variety of Marxists, it included adherents of other, mostly left-leaning, political tendencies. The opposition's activity focused on information. Commentaries and analyses of current developments, reflections on the glorious past of 1968-69, letters and petitions to national leaders documenting cases of repression—and disseminating such material both at home and abroad—this was the most prevalent activity. Several volumes are now available in Western languages written by or concerning the opposition against Husak.[3]

This activity came to be more or less tolerated by the authorities. When, however, the opposition attempted to switch from political commentary to political action or indeed political challenge, however moderate and innocuous, the reaction was swift

2. Both were deputy prime ministers in 1968.

3. Cf. especially the books edited by Jiri Pelikan, *Ici Prague* (Paris, 1973), and *Socialist Opposition in Eastern Europe* (New York, 1976).

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and exemplary. In the early years of Husak's reign, two major political trials were staged: in 1971, 19 young people, mostly students, were sentenced to up to four years in prison. In the summer of 1972, altogether 46 people were charged in a series of trials, and sentenced to up to six and a half years in prison. During the 1971 election campaign they had apparently disseminated leaflets in which they reminded the populace of their right to vote against the official slate of candidates or indeed to abstain altogether.[4]

The trials must have provided a sense of limits. They amounted to a very serious blow to the opposition but the regime did not escape unscathed, either: the international publicity was quite embarrassing, and at home, parallels between the early 1950s and the early 1970s were not overlooked. The price might have turned out to be too great for both sides. Since 1972, no major trials have been staged—but the opposition, too, has refrained from overtly challenging the regime for power. The political climate had rather stabilized. The outpouring of protests, all duly registered abroad—especially in Western Europe—became quite regular, just as methods of non-terroristic repression were further refined. Only now and then was the relative calm disturbed: for example, when the political testament of Josef Smrkovsky appeared in early 1975,[5] or when a letter by Alexander Dubcek was published later that year in most major world newspapers.[6] But in general, the lines were relatively well defined and clear.

The Czechs habitually refer to their present situation as "war." The historical memory of World War II is not one of the front ploughing through the country back and forth but rather one of the daily routine under German occupation. The routine is similar today even if the occupying power is different. While the regime is less terroristic (although who knows what would happen if a real war were to break out), it is far more debilitating intellectually. The Biafra of the spirit, as Louis Aragon termed it. Nevertheless, even war has its everyday, as Kosik says.

The everyday of this "war" might be described in terms of a social contract. Citizens, A.J. Liehm has argued, surrender to the state all their rights. In return, the state assures them stable employment.[7] This is an implied contract between Husak's leadership and the population at large; it leaves out the oppositionists who have neither surrendered their rights nor had any stable employment. But the mass of the population has been employed at good wages, and in the sense of acquisitive economics, the country has never had it so good. Zdener Mlynar, a leading opposition political scientist, has pointed out another aspect of this contract:[8] The population provides ritualized expressions of support—unanimously raising hands, enrolling in assorted regime-sponsored organizations, depositing meaningless slips of colored paper into ballot boxes. In turn, the regime allows for a quiet and undisturbed enjoyment of one's private life, after hours, on weekends. Exceptional rewards are

4. For more information, cf., e.g., *New Politics*, 9:4, pp. 51-94, special section on "Repression and Resistance in Czechoslovakia."

5. Cf., e.g., H. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton, 1976), pp. 878-885.

6. *New York Times*, April 13-15, 1975. This letter spurred the secret police to conduct house searches of several prominent opposition personalities which in turn led to an exchange of letters between Karel Kosik and Jean-Paul Sartre (which has appeared in *Telos*, 25 [Fall 1975], pp. 192-195), and to Ludvik Vaculik's letter to Kurt Waldheim (in *New York Review of Books*, October 30, 1975).

7. Antonin J. Liehm, "Intellectuals and the New Social Contract," *Telos*, 23 (Spring 1975), pp. 156-164.

8. In a recent memorandum which has not yet been published.

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available for exceptional zeal.

Thus by the mid-1970s, a sort of equilibrium prevailed. On the one hand, the ruling segment of the ruling party, assisted by the hard-core extremists. On the other hand, the opposition which had become a part of normality, even to the point of running, relatively unmolested, a self-help manuscript-distribution outfit, Padlocked Publishers. Between the two poles, the population at large, in and out (mostly out) of the Communist Party. The equilibrium was predicated on maintaining the contract: on the regime's ability to deliver economically, and on leaving people alone, encouraging political apathy.

The semblance of normalcy affected foreign affairs as well. The pariah in the family of nations was gradually more and more accepted, not because it had changed, but merely because of the passage of time.

In December 1976, the last four political prisoners of those sentenced in 1972 were released. Not too early, but nevertheless a few months ahead of schedule. It seemed at the time that the regime might be mellowing. Maybe a dialogue between the rulers and the opposition would now be possible: to restore a little culture, to employ a lot of wasted talent. For a moment it appeared that the extremist hard core had been beaten back and that the pragmatic opportunists could move toward a truce—if not toward peace—in the country that felt itself at war.

The Charter 77 manifesto appeared in the first days of January. In content it differed little from many other pronouncements of the opposition. Few of the issues it raised had not been brought up previously: denial of elementary civil rights, discrimination in education, suppression of religious freedom, restrictions on workers' organizations, violation of due process. What was new, however, was its form—and its context.

Invoking a "sense of co-responsibility" for the prevailing conditions (a point raised, e.g., by Karel Kosik in his 1975 letter to Sartre), Charter 77 proclaimed itself to be an "association"—though not an "organization"—of people dedicated to the protection of human rights. Its scope was astonishing. No longer was opposing the regime a matter of a few dozen well-known names, protected by an international reputation which sheltered them from reprisals. The Charter was originally signed by some 250 people—and more signatures were coming it, at the rate of some 150-200 a month. The signatories came from all walks of life and all parts of the political spectrum, as also symbolized by the three designated spokesman: Vaclav Havel, a 40-year-old non-communist playwright, Jiri Hajek, an ex-communist (and ex-ex-social democrat) political scientist and diplomat of the older generation, and Jan Patocka, the elderly philosopher-phenomenologist.

The human rights issue was, in addition, raised in a novel international context. The regime had been assiduously subscribing to various international agreements and convenants concerning human rights, sponsored by the United Nations but including, e.g., also the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference in 1975. The actual motives for the regime's participation in such international activity had not so much to do with its intentions (let alone practices) regarding human rights as with the mercenary question of seeking international recognition and legitimacy, in the same tradition that declared the 1936 Soviet constitution to be "the world's most democratic." Charter 77 undertook the task of comparing avowed principles with actual practices, in an effort to force the regime to comply with its own rules, to have at least a modicum of *Recht* prevail in this supposed *Rechtstaat*.

Whether the Charter will accomplish this goal is open to question. The publication

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of its manifesto, combined with the regime's reaction to it, has at this point, however, achieved one thing: the equilibrium of the past five years has been profoundly disturbed.

The initial reaction of the authorities was violent. It included arrests of a number of people, putting others under house arrest and endless interrogation of most signatories. Jan Patocka, one of the spokesmen for the Charter movement, fell victim to a stroke after such interrogation. All this was accompanied by a vituperative press campaign. The result, however, was to heighten public interest in the actual document; and made the issue of human rights violations the most widely discussed one of the day.

The regime tried to launch a campaign of mass protest against the chartists—but the results were mixed, to say the least. Zdenek Mlynar has analyzed these results in the above-mentioned memorandum. He noted that particularly in factories, workers were reluctant to affix their signatures to a denunciation of a document they had not read. Consequently, only the leadership—management, trade union and communist party representatives—signed these denunciations, "on behalf of" so many hundreds of thousands of workers.

White collar workers had more to lose and were more ready to sign by name. But even among them, many refused. Thus as in any conflict, more than two sides appeared: the regime, and the chartists; and the additional thousands who, while not signing the Charter, refused to sign an attack against it, exercising thereby yet another level of dissent and of moral leadership.

The authorities' insistence that people not only anonymously denounce something but do so personally, frequently in a public and thus in a humiliating manner, strained the limits of the contract with the population at large. Suddenly, the regime demanded something more, a kind of political surtax. In exchange, it offered nothing.

To make matters worse, the regime was straining the ideological dimension of its contract with the people at the very time when its economic dimension was coming under stress as well. During the last two years, the economic situation of the country has made a decided turn for the worse, as a result of a number of factors—including, e.g., the considerable increase in Soviet oil prices. Since the 1970 explosion in Poland, great care has been taken to satisfy the Czechoslovak consumer. This may no longer be possible: shortages of essentials have appeared, the price of potatoes went up 130 percent last fall, etc. There is no question but that additional unpopular economic measures will have to be implemented. From the regime's viewpoint, the Charter could not have come at a worse moment.

The social contract will have to be renegotiated in its entirety. It will be a difficult process and its outcome is entirely uncertain. But the stagnant cesspool of the country's politics has started moving, after half a decade of marking time.

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# CHARTER 77 MANIFESTO

In the Czechoslovak Register of Laws No. 120 of October 13, 1976, texts were published of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which were signed on behalf of our republic in 1968, reiterated at Helsinki in 1975 and came into force in our country on March 23, 1976. From that date our citizens have enjoyed the rights, and our state the duties, ensuing from them.

The human rights and freedoms underwritten by these covenants constitute features of civilized life for which many progressive movements have striven throughout history and whose codification could greatly assist humane developments in our society.

We accordingly welcome the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic's accession to those agreements.

Their publication, however, serves as a powerful reminder of the extent to which basic human rights in our country exist, regrettably, on paper alone.

The right to freedom of expression, for example, guaranteed by article 19 of the first-mentioned covenant, is in our case purely illusory. Tens of thousands of our citizens are prevented from working in their own fields for the sole reason that they hold views differing from official ones, and are discriminated against and harrassed in all kinds of ways by the authorities and public organizations. Deprived as they are of any means to defend themselves, they become victims of a virtual apartheid.

Hundreds of thousands of other citizens are denied that "freedom from fear" mentioned in the preamble to the first covenant, being condemned to the constant risk of unemployment or other penalties if they voice their own opinions.

In violation of article 13 of the second-mentioned covenant, guaranteeing everyone the right to education, countless young people are prevented from studying because of their own views or even their parents'. Innumerable citizens live in fear of their own, or their children's right to education being withdrawn if they should ever speak up in accordance with their convictions.

Any exercise of the right to "seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print" or "in the form of art" specified in Article 19, clause 2 of the first covenant is followed by extra-judicial and even judicial sanctions, often in the form of criminal charges as in the recent trial of young musicians.

Freedom of public expression is inhibited by the centralized control of all the communication media and of publishing and cultural institutions. No philosophical, political or scientific view or artistic activity that departs ever so slightly from the narrow bounds of official ideology or aesthetics is allowed to be published; no open criticism can be made of abnormal social phenomena; no public defence is possible against false and insulting charges made in official propaganda—the legal protection against "attacks on honour and reputation" clearly guaranteed by article 17 of the first covenant is in practice non-existent: false accusations cannot be rebutted and any attempt to secure compensation or correction through the courts is futile; no open debate is allowed in the domain of thought and art.

Many scholars, writers, artists and others are penalized for having legally published or expressed, years ago, opinions which are condemned by those who hold political power today.

Freedom of religious confession, emphatically guaranteed by article 18 of the first covenant, is continually curtailed by arbitrary official action; by interference with the activity of churchmen, who are constantly threatened by the refusal of the state to

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permit them the exercise of their functions, or by the withdrawal of such permission; by financial or other transactions against those who express their religious faith in word or action; by constraints on religious training and so forth.

One instrument for the curtailment or in many cases complete elimination of many civic rights is the system by which all national institutions and organizations are in effect subject to political directives from the machinery of the ruling party and to decisions made by powerful individuals.

The constitution of the republic, its laws and legal norms do not regulate the form or content, the issuing or application of such decisions; they are often only given out verbally, unknown to the public at large and beyond its powers to check; their originators are responsible to no one but themselves and their own hierarchy; yet they have a decisive impact on the decision-making and executive organs of government, justice, trade unions, interest groups and all other organizations, of the other political parties, enterprises, factories, institutions, offices and so on, for whom these instructions have precedence even before the law.

Where organizations or individuals, in the interpretation of their rights and duties, come into conflict with such directives, they cannot have recourse to any non-party authority, since none such exists. This constitutes, of course, a serious limitation of the right ensuing from articles 21 and 22 of the first-mentioned covenant, which provides for freedom of association and forbids any restriction on its exercise, from article 25 on the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, and from article 26 stipulating equal protection by the law without discrimination.

This state of affairs likewise prevents workers and others from exercising the unrestricted right to establish trade unions and other organizations to protect their economic and social interests, and from freely enjoying the right to strike provided for in clause 1 of article 8 in the second-mentioned covenant.

Further civic rights, including the explicit prohibition of "arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence" (article 17 of the first covenant), are seriously vitiated by the various forms of interference in the private life of citizens exercised by the Ministry of the Interior, for example by bugging telephones and houses, opening mail, following personal movements, searching homes, setting up networks of neighbourhood informers (often recruited by illicit threats or promises) and in other ways.

The ministry frequently interferes in employer's decisions, instigates acts of discrimination by authorities and organizations, brings weight to bear on the organs of justice and even orchestrates propaganda campaigns in the media. This activity is governed by no law and, being clandestine, affords the citizen no chance to defend himself.

In cases of prosecution on political grounds the investigative and judicial organs violate the rights of those charged and of those defending them, as guaranteed by article 14 of the first covenant and indeed by Czechoslovak law. The prison treatment of those sentenced in such cases is an affront to their human dignity and a menace to their health, being aimed at breaking their morale.

Clause 2, article 12 of the first covenant, guaranteeing every citizen the right to leave the country, is consistently violated, or under the pretense of "defense of national security" is subjected to various unjustifiable conditions (clause 3). The granting of entry visas to foreigners is also treated arbitrarily, and many are unable to visit Czechoslovakia merely because of professional or personal contacts with those of our citizens who are subject to discrimination.

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Some of our people—either in private, at their places of work or by the only feasible public channel, the foreign media—have drawn attention to the systematic violation of human rights and democratic freedoms and demanded amends in specific cases. But their pleas have remained largely ignored or been made grounds for police investigation.

Responsibility for the maintenance of civic rights in our country naturally devolves in the first place on the political and state authorities. Yet not only on them: everyone bears his share of responsibility for the conditions that prevail and accordingly also for the observance of legally enshrined agreements, binding upon all individuals as well as upon governments.

It is this sense of co-responsibility, our belief in the importance of its conscious public acceptance and the general need to give it new and more effective expression that led us to the idea of creating Charter 77, whose inception we today publicly announce.

Charter 77 is a loose, informal and open association of people of various shades of opinion, faiths and professions united by the will to strive individually and collectively for the respecting of civil and human rights in our own country and throughout the world—rights accorded to all men by the two mentioned international covenants, by the Final Act of the Helsinki conference and by numerous other international documents opposing war, violence and social or spiritual oppression, and which are comprehensively laid down in the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Charter 77 springs from a background of friendship and solidarity among people who share our concern for those ideals that have inspired, and continue to inspire, their lives and their work.

Charter 77 is not an organization; it has no rules, permanent bodies or formal membership. It embraces everyone who agrees with its ideas and participates in its work. It does not form the basis for any oppositional political activity. Like many similar citizen initiatives in various countries, West and East, it seeks to promote the general public interest.

It does not aim, then, to set out its own platform of political or social reform or change, but within its own field of impact to conduct a constructive dialogue with the political and state authorities, particularly by drawing attention to individual cases where human and civic rights are violated, to document such grievances and suggest remedies, to make proposals of a more general character calculated to reinforce such rights and machinery for protecting them, to act as intermediary in situations of conflict which may lead to violation of rights, and so forth.

By its symbolic name Charter 77 denotes that it has come into being at the start of a year proclaimed as Political Prisoners' Year—a year in which a conference in Belgrade is due to review the implementation of the obligations assumed at Helsinki.

As signatories, we hereby authorize Professor Dr. Jan Patocka, Dr. Vaclav Havel and Professor Dr. Jiri Hajek to act as the spokesmen for the Charter. These spokesmen are endued with full authority to represent it *vis-à-vis* state and other bodies, and the public at home and abroad, and their signatures attest the authenticity of documents issued by the Charter. They will have us and others who join us as their colleagues, taking part in any needful negotiations, shouldering particular tasks and sharing every responsibility.

We believe that Charter 77 will help to enable all the citizens of Czechoslovakia to work and live as free human beings.

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# POLITICAL TESTAMENT*

## by Jan Patocka

Many people ask whether Charter 77 will not lead to increased "vigilance" (on the part of the authorities) which in turn will have an adverse effect on all citizens.

Let us be frank about this: In the past, no conformity has yet led to any improvement in the situation, only a worsening. The greater the fear and servility, the more brazen have the authorities become. There is no way to make them relax the pressure other than by showing them that injustices and discrimination are not ignored.

What is needed is for people to behave at all times with dignity, not to allow themselves to be frightened and intimidated, and to speak the truth—behavior which is impressive just because it is in such contrast to the way the authorities carry on.

Thus it is possible that repression may be intensified in individual cases. People can lose even those jobs which until now seemed a safe haven—night watchmen, window cleaners, stokers, hospital orderlies, and so on. But not for long, since these jobs have to be done by somebody.

And there is the important gain in the feelings of uncertainty engendered in the official mind. Our rulers can now never be quite sure who it is they are dealing with. They must ask themselves whether those who still obey them today will be willing to do so tomorrow.

The fact that the opponents of the charter have felt it necessary to unleash a ferocious smear campaign regardless of truth, and that they manipulated "public opinion" to produce resolutions attacking us, has created far more sympathy for us, both at home and abroad, than we dared expect. This alone is an important result, for innocence and decent conduct are powerful political factors.

The legal character of the charter, the fact that its aim is to foster an unconditional and publicly accountable legality, the obvious refusal of the authorities to accept this principle of equality of the citizen before the law, their refusal to conduct a dialogue about the issues involved—all this has given us a considerable political advantage and forced our adversary to seek new methods in his struggle against us.

The authorities have realized it is not enough to invent transparent fairy tales about antistate centers and so-called "compromised" people. The charter is not about personalities but about issues and factual arguments, and the latter have so far been completely lacking where our opponents are concerned.

We may well be asked how long we expect to keep the support of our own people if we are unable to help them except by protests on paper. And how long can we count on sympathies abroad?

Let me try and turn the question around. Let us ask what we expect of the signing of international conventions on human, economic, social and cultural rights (at Helsinki). Let us also ask what those who actually signed them, on both sides of the world political divide, expected.

We believe that the signatories in many of the Eastern-bloc countries expected they would not have to change anything in their treatment of their populations and that everything would remain as before.

Others, however, expected a great deal. The ordinary people in these countries saw

*Five days before he died in a Prague hospital, Jan Patocka wrote a final public statement, justifying the Charter 77 movement he helped to found. By extension, it makes clear why so many East Europeans have chosen this moment to stand fast for human rights in their respective countries. This text of Patocka's message has been made available by the Palach Press.

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in these pacts a new, indeed the only, guarantee that there would be no repetition of the events of the 1920s and 1930s in the Soviet Union and the 1950s in our country—things which happened in spite of these states swearing by socialism and humanity and boasting the "freest constitutions in the world."

The international pacts signed as a result of the Helsinki conference did bring something new, giving fresh hope to mankind. This new element explains why Charter 77 and the frenetic reactions to it have evoked such interest. It showed that implementing the agreements would not be as easy as might have been expected.

We are convinced that there is no one in the world who does not know that the Helsinki accords *must* be accepted if we are to escape a future of major wars and minor conflicts. But it is only now that we have come to realized just how terribly long a road it is going to be, and we know it thanks to the charter. Thanks to it we also know that the world has been disappointed, painfully disappointed, in its expectations.

It is the false detente that has been exposed, and this has caused many Western socialists and communists to raise their voices in our support, requesting that the signatories of the charter be treated with decency.

The Eastern countries have come a long way since the 1950s in the implementation of human rights.

Why then have they become so alarmed? Despite the harsh words and bad deeds, all roads are not barred. We can see that there has been a certain relaxation—though we would consider it still pretty despicable—which would not have come about without the charter. For instance, people have been admitted to membership of the artistic unions, for which, however, their signature on the "anti-charter" was required as a shameful entrance fee.

We thus have to report that people are again aware that there are things for which it is worthwhile to suffer. That the things for which one may have to suffer are often those which make life worth living. That without these things, art, literature, culture and so on are mere crafts engaged in to earn one's daily bread.

All this we know today, and to a large extent this knowledge is due to Charter 77.

## PATOCKA, PHILOSOPHER AND RESISTER*

### by Paul Ricoeur

Professor Jan Patocka, one of the three spokesmen of Charter 77, was buried on Thursday, March 17, 1977. I would like to add a few traits to the portrait of the Czechoslovakian philosopher drawn by Manuel Lucbert.[1] I would like to indicate what led a discipline of Husserl to become a leader of a movement devoted exclusively to defending civil and political rights and what the Charter 77 manifesto itself owes to Patocka.

In 1936, Patocka had written a book called *The World of Nature as a Philosophical Problem* (republished in Prague in 1971). The theme seems, at first sight, apolitical. The author stated in terms similar to those of Husserl in *The Crisis* that all theoretical knowledge is deeply rooted in a human and social life-world defined by everyday perception and cares. What could be less political than this inquiry into the

*This article originally appeared in *Le Monde*, March 19, 1977. Translated by David J. Parent.

1. *Le Monde,* March 15, 1977.

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foundations of knowledge? And yet in his teacher Husserl, this same investigation—by calling for an awakening of the subject lost in his objects and in the constructions of which he has forgotten that he is their author—ended though certainly not in a political manifesto, yet in an urgent plea to cultured men to rediscover the principle of their personal responsibility by a return to critical reason.

It is not irrelevant that Husserl gave his lectures in 1935 in Prague—as well as in Vienna—and that they were in part published in Belgrade just before World War II. Their point was aimed against the totalitarianism of the time via the dismissals of reason—scientism, Romanticism, nihilism—which served to support tyranny. For reasons which will be stated below, I do not hesitate to regard this appeal of Husserl's as one stage linking the present defense of human rights and liberties in Prague with the great wave of European rationalism of the classical age, by way of 19th century socialisms.

The Charter's tone is unmistakable, as is Patocka's interpretation of it in a text published by the International Committee for the Principles of Charter 77 (cf. *Le Monde*, Feb. 10, 1977): "No society, however technologically well equipped, could function without a moral standard, without a conviction resulting not from opportunity, circumstances and expected advantages. Morality, however, does not exist to enable society to function, but simply so that man can be man. It is not up to man to define morality arbitrarily according to his needs, his wishes, tendencies and desires. On the contrary, morality defines man... The idea of an international treaty for human rights means nothing else but this: governments and society place themselves completely under the sovereignty of the moral sense. They recognize an unconditional higher order superior to themselves."

*Intellectual and Moral Corruption*

It is hard for Western intellectuals, still occupied with detaching themselves from moralism and de-constructing reason, to understand why Czech intellectuals resort to morality in the very area of political demands. To understand them, two factors must be taken into account. First, the incredible spiritual corruption engendered by political "normalization" must be imagined. Vaclav Havel was speaking of this and nothing but this in his "Open Letter to Gustav Husak" (*Politique d'aujourd'hui*, Sept.-Oct., 1975). The so-called Havel regime is holding its citizens in line by one fear or another spread by the police network: fear of losing one's job, lodging or advantage of the sort, fear of seeing one's children deprived of the right to an education, fear of not being able to publish, etc. Thus "each citizen is forced to be a hypocrite." Faced with a government which systematically organizes the wholesale flight from the public arena to private comfort in a petty bourgeois style, the first political task is to subject this institutionalized demoralization to an accurate diagnosis: "Order," Havel says, "has been re-established at the price of mental servility, emotional desensitization and an existential void. To all appearances such consolidation takes place at the price of a spiritual and moral crisis of society." The most striking evidence of this subtle corruption is the lamentable state of the arts, the theater and literature: "The 'aesthetics of banality' imposed by power stems from the same desire to keep citizens flat on their backs and to check any creative activity which might conceivably become critical of the 'order of life'—which is like the 'peace of the cemetery.' " Does this begin to show why to awaken the citizen and lead him back to the public arena it is first necessary to induce him to leave his hiding place in private life and to appeal to his moral reaponsiblity as a citizen? When a people's spiritual perversion reaches such an

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extent, how can history, arrested, suffocated, exhausted, "again someday insist upon and actually make itself be heard," as Havel asks in pathetic terms, unless the individual is called back to his civic responsibility?

*The Only Recourse*

But Western intellectuals should keep a second factor in mind: the only recourse against so perfected a system of normalization is to invoke the texts on civil liberties and rights to which the state has committed itself. This circumstance explains why the Charter from the very beginning speaks the language of man as a citizen and not that of a socialist worker. Since the end of the Prague Spring, to advocate a socialism with a human face has become futile. So it became necessary to go back further into the past and seek support in Western political experience since the end of the Middle Ages, and in this way to recover the political arena from which power has expelled the citizens. That is why Charter 77 opens by recalling these solemn acts: "In the Czechoslovak Register of Laws No. 120 of October 13, 1976, texts were published of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which were signed on behalf of our republic in 1968, reiterated at Helsinki in 1975 and came into force in our country on March 23, 1976. From that date our citizens have enjoyed the rights and our state the duties, ensuing from them." The two treaties cited here had been recommended for ratification by the U.N. They were not ratified properly at Helsinki but the final act of the Conference on European Security and Cooperation (August 1, 1975), refers to them in Part I, Point 7, which begins as follows: "Participating states respect the rights of man and his fundamental liberties, including freedom of thought, of conscience, of religion or conviction for all, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion." Charter 77 finds it easy to take advantage of the ideology underlying the statement that these rights "all follow from the dignity inherent in the human person ...and are essential for his free and integral development." But while for certain governments those formulations represent only a price to be paid to get the West to recognize the political *status quo* in Europe, the dissidents—or rather the resisters—adopt them not for tactical reasons but out of conviction. For them the philosophy merely alleged by the final act of Helsinki ought to be truly professed by states. Until such time, this philosophy shall be that of the signatories of Charter 77. This manifesto expresses itself in the following terms in its second paragraph: "The human rights and freedoms underwritten by these covenants constitute features of civilized life for which many progressive movements have striven throughout history and whose codification could greatly assist humane developments in our society."

By this the resisters are saying three things. To the men of power, this: the liberties you allege, freedom of expression, the right to an education without political discrimination, the right to information, the right of association, freedom of religious confession, the inviolability of private life, of the home and the mails—these liberties do not exist in our country.[2] To their fellow citizens: it is our moral duty to require the

2. Illustrative for the area of freedom to teach and publish is the "Directive for Thesis Reporters" signed by Professor Ceska, vice-rector of Charles University in Prague: every evaluation of a candidate's works must ask whether "the works are written in a Marxist-Leninist spirit or in some other spirit following a methodology alien to Marxism (for example, neo-positivism, scientism, neo-Kantianism, phenomenology, structuralism, Freudianism, etc.). The reporter must underscore very expressly each case of this sort in the candidate's works, even those found only in the bibliographical appendix or critical apparatus. The reporter will be held responsible; he will have to guarantee that no work of this type will be submitted for approval by the certifying committee" (quoted in *Politique d'aujourd'hui*, July-August, 1975).

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state to subject itself to the principles to which it is solemnly pledged. Finally, they say to the foreigner: know that we, the resisters in Prague and elsewhere, have effectively broken away from the system of terror. Also, when you intervene in our favor, do not fear that we are afraid. For from now on we will not give in.

*No Liberation by Force*

As for us, thus addressed, we must realize that the resisters do not expect the West to liberate them by force. If such an illusion ever could have been fostered in the West or among such dissidents in the East, today everyone knows that the Cold War is over and that the task now is to promote military detente, economic cooperation and the "demand for civil liberties," without ever submitting to the blackmail that the struggle for liberties would hurt detente. We must realize that the only help the West can give to resisters is to incessantly remind their governments of the obligations they have publicly assumed, to publicly denounce violations wherever they occur, and to give public support to any personalities being threatened—a support which, as we know, is their best physical protection.

They must not be lacking at least this kind of support, limited though it be. And the best way to not leave it as President Carter's monopoly is, on the one hand, for the governments of Western Europe to assume the responsibility for it (the visit of the Dutch foreign minister to Jan Patocka was an initial sign of this), on the other hand, for the leftist movements to take a clear and intransigent stand.

We are compelled to do so since the proclamation of civil rights and liberties was the object of a public treaty between states. This act placed liberties and rights under the control of international public opinion and under the joint protection of all states.

Because he was not afraid, Jan Patocka was harassed by the police, subjected to lengthy interrogations, hounded by the police even to his hospital bed, and literally killed by power. The relentless persecution of this man proves that, in the event of a people's extreme abjection, philosophical pleading for subjectivity is becoming the citizen's only recourse against the tyrant.

## ON BRECHT AND EISENSTEIN

### by Rainer Friedrich

In the antithetical tables 'dramatic versus epic theatre' from the notes to *Mahagonny*,[1] the translator used the felicitous term *montage* (epic) as opposition to *growth* (dramatic). 'Montage' is often used by Brecht to contrast modern with traditional art; moreover, this term brings out clearly the close affinity of Brecht's epic theatre to film and points in particular to the cinematographic construction of his dramatic actions: "As we have seen, the Augsburger cuts his plays up into a series of little independent playlets, so that the action progresses by jumps. He doesn't like scenes to slide imperceptibly into one another."[2]

This opposition of 'growth' and 'montage' is of more general significance. In place of 'growth' we could read the term *mimesis*, and the replacement of mimesis by

1. *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. by John Willet (New York, 1964), p. 37.
2. *The Messingkauf Dialogues*, trans. by John Willet (London, 1965), p. 75.

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montage tells in a nutshell the story of modern art.[3]

Mimesis as imitation of nature by art does not so much mean art's imitation of *natura naturata*, but rather of *natura naturans*, i.e., art imitates nature's productive processes (Aristotle)[4] rather than natural objects. The result of mimesis is the organic work of art;[5] its categories are probability, necessity, organic unity and teleological directedness. Such a concept of mimesis—imitation of *natura naturans*—was able to survive the rise of modern subjectivity in the Renaissance when the artist was conceived of as creating *ut alter deus*, as another god (Scaliger, Sir Philip Sidney, Fracastoro): no longer an imitator of nature but the creator of another nature, a higher form of reality. In this process the aesthetic realm as manifested in the organic work of art established itself over and against empirical reality.

At this point, however, the moment of *construction* enters the concept of mimesis and its product, the organic work of art, although unacknowledged and as something to be hidden. For the practical principle of the organic work of art is *ars est celare artem*, art as the concealment of art. The organic work of art conceals the fact that it is constituted; that it is artificially produced. It disavows the aesthetic subject that constituted it and presents itself as something immediate: nature. The classical formulation of this principle is found in Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, in the paragraph with a title that says all: *Fine art is an art so far as it has at the same time the appearance of being nature*, where he writes: "the finality in the product of fine art, intentional though it be, must not have the appearance of being intentional; i.e., fine art must be capable of being viewed as nature, although we are conscious of it as art. But the way in which a product of art seems like nature, is by the presence of perfect exactness in the agreement with rules prescribing how alone the product can be what it is intended to be, but with an absence of laboured effect. . .i.e., without a trace of the artist having always had the rule presented to him and of its having fettered his mental powers."[6] A resolution of the inherent antagonism is achieved by a tour de force in the cult of the genius which Kant defines in the following paragraph as the "innate mental aptitude (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art."

However diverse the many schools of modern art and literature may be, common to them is the abandonment of the principle *ars est celare artem*. Indeed, adherence to this principle nowadays is the mark of inferior art. The modern work of art divests itself of the appearance of being something 'naturally given' by freely showing that it is an artifact; of feigned immediacy by confessing that it is constituted; and of false objectivity by not concealing the aesthetic subject who constituted it. This signals the end of the organic work of art—that process which Hegel had analyzed as the end of art and Benjamin as the loss of its aura.

In no other formal principle is this more manifestly expressed than in that of *montage*; the combination of heterogeneous elements renders organic unity impossible, lays bare the artistic method, and points at the aesthetic subject that

3. The reader should compare the following paragraphs with what F. Gaede says about the mimetic and antimemetic traditions in his remarkable little book *Realismus von Brant bis Brecht* (Munich, 1972). F. Gaede's book demonstrates that Germanistik can have philosophically relevant results—a book interesting in more than one sense and deserving extensive discussion.

4. Aristotle, *Physics*, 199 a8ff, in R. McKeon, *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York, 1941), pp. 249-250.

5. *Ibid.*, Aristotle's *Poetics*, chapter 23.

6. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, trans. by J.C. Meredith (1911), pp. 166f (translation slightly altered).

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appears behind and in the construction of the work of art. Montage is the principle of the modern work of art.

Montage has many facets and uses. As its given technical basis, it is closely connected with the medium of film; in this medium, however, it had to be raised from the given technical procedure to an artistic principle, in the process of which the film attained the status of an art-form. In the film medium, then, montage has its fullest range of uses and possibilities—so much so that Hauser in his *Social History of Art* treats modern art and literature under the heading "The Film Age," attesting thereby to the ubiquity of the montage principle. Although this principle found its most appropriate medium in film, montage evolved as an artistic principle before film became an art. As Brecht put it—and this is particularly valid now, when, after having abandoned montage, film is re-discovering it via literature, e.g., Godard through Brecht—: "It is conceivable that other kinds of artists, such as playwrights and novelists, may for the moment be able to work in a more cinematic way than the film people." [7]

In general terms, montage is the combination—at times a mere juxtaposition—of two or more different, often antithetical elements resulting in something more than their sum. It allows for an *open form* so that the resulting unity is not an organic unity that absorbs and dissolves its moments by making them slide imperceptibly into one another. Instead it is a unity which preserves its moments as distinct ones and leaves them a considerable degree of independence. There is a discontinuous element in this unity which produces an inner tension.

Montage as a ubiquitous and universal artistic principle sprang from that process in the modern world which progressively released modern aesthetic subjectivity from the ties of a pre-established tradition. Although the following paragraphs appear to trace the historical development of montage as an artistic principle, they are to show rather its logical unfolding; the moments which emerge can, and often do, co-exist in the work of one and the same artist.

The modern artist's break with tradition makes him on the one hand forgo the artistic orientation and intellectual security which his integration in a tradition has hitherto afforded him; on the other hand, tradition which once determined the artist's work as to form and content, is now handed over to him along with the traditions of other cultures as an infinite wealth of material with an infinite number of possible combinations. Montage, then, is the mode in which the modern artist appropriates for himself this infinite, yet at the same time chaotic and fragmented wealth of new aesthetic materials, which include forms and styles. Ezra Pound's *Cantos* and the whole of Piccasso's *oeuvre* are magnificent examples. In this function montage becomes the vehicle of the triumphant aesthetic subjectivity through which it displays its unfettered imagination and creativity and demonstrates its sovereign mastery over the diverse material. However, it is also the vehicle of subjective extravagance and caprice; [8] for in total artistic freedom there lurks as its reverse the possibility of total loss of substance, even if unnoticed in the ecstacy of liberation.

The process which established montage as the principle of the modern work of art culminated in the avantgardist movements of Dadaism, Surrealism and Futurism. With these movements montage became a central artistic—and at the same time more

7. *Brecht on Theater, op.cit.*, p. 48.

8. This is somewhat overemphasized by Hugh Friedrich in his *Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik* (Reinbek, 1956), pp. 119ff; on this cf. Heinz Brüggemann, *Literarische Technik und sociale Revolution. Versuche über das Verhältnis von Kunstproduktion. Marxismus und literarischer Theorie in der theoretischen Schriften Bertolt Brechts* (Reinbek, 1973).

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than just an artistic—principle. Eisenstein's connections with Russian Futurism are well known, while Brecht, although he did not formally belong to any of these movements, had much in common with them: not only the use of montage as the central artistic principle, but also the program of reuniting art and life, in which montage gains its supreme importance.[9] As the core of any cultural revolution, there is an artistic program that transcends art.

Dadaism, Surrealism and Russian Futurism declare war on art—not on art as such but on art as a sphere detached from life which, through this detachment, restricts the productive force of fantasy to the realm of art and thereby renders life prosaic, trivial and devoid of beauty and meaning. Only if art *qua* such a separated sphere is destroyed will it be able to penetrate and revolutionize reality and the praxis of everyday life.

This program differs from that of Italian Futurism, where the intended unification takes the form of *subjugating* life to art—the ultimate position at which self-idolizing art in the form of a ruthless aestheticism arrives when it goes beyond the boundaries of art and reduces life to aesthetic material up to the point of destroying life in the aestheticization of war. It is exactly this aestheticization of life—particularly of political life—which links Italian Futurism to fascism, a link by no means accidental.

In contradistinction, the dadaist, surrealist, and Russian futurist union of life and art is conceived dialectically: life *takes art up into itself* and is thereby qualitatively changed in the direction of enrichment and liberation. This program is in some way analogous to Marx's program to abolish and simultaneously actualize philosophy; and Brecht's epic theatre may be described as the attempt to provide its artistic version. However, Brecht always kept clear of both these extreme positions in which the distinction of art and life is lost in one way or another (and Eisenstein early in his artistic career gave up his futurist attitude towards art to take a position very similar to that of Brecht). Although there are direct links between Brecht and Russian Futurism,[10] and indirect ones with Dadaism and Surrealism, Brecht never went so far as to propose that art be superseded as a distinct form of praxis by making it merge with and dissolve into life. On the contrary, Brecht, while rejecting the notion of an autonomous self-sufficient art, insisted that art had to retain its distinctiveness and independence. Thus, and only thus, could art work as *eingreifendes Denken*, thought that intervenes, and become an active moment in political life, i.e., politics directed to the totality of the body politic. Translated into Marxian terms, this means the liberation of human society from the domination of first and second nature. In freely participating in this process art will be able to regain to some degree that substance that it once had in the classic Greek *polis*. Art is re-united with life not by subsuming life under itself nor by being absorbed into it but by establishing itself as a distinct independent force within life that actively and freely works towards the latter's change in the direction of liberation.

The program of destroying art as an autonomous sphere detached from life expresses itself in the specific form of the dadaist and surrealist montage which provocatively juxtaposes art and trivial fragments of everyday life. Without being previously shaped by the artist's subjectivity, empirical reality invades the sphere of art; the negation of its autonomy and the destruction of its aura are made more

9. See Peter Bürger's excellent study, *Theorie der Avantgarde* (Frankfurt, 1974). On surrealism, see H.M. Enzensberger, "Die aporien der avantgarde," in *Einzelheiten* (Frankfurt, 1962).

10. On Brecht and Russian futurism, see Brüggemann, *op.cit.*, chapter 7.

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poignant by the banal form in which empirical reality enters the hallowed realm of art. Nothing destroys the aura that surrounds art more efficiently than the *Ready Mades* of Marcel Duchamp: banal objects of everyday life such as bicycle wheels, combs, bottle-drying racks and urinals[11] are given titles (e.g., 'fountain' for the urinal, to quote the most famous example) and the artist's signature, and then displayed in a formal art exhibit. The montage consists in giving an anti-artistic object all of the paraphernalia that constitute the aura of the work of art and placing it in the sanctified artistic framework. Such combinations of heterogeneous elements with their implicit hostile verdict on autonomous art contain powerful *estrangement effects*, designed to provoke and shock the viewer, and thus produce a change in him. The shock results from the fact that in the montages the fundamental laws of art are violated: in combining art and sordid empirical reality, the law of aesthetic purity; in juxtaposing heterogeneous objects, the law of organic unity; and the fact that the very procedure of montage reveals the work of art as an artifact violates the principle that art conceal itself. Thus, the dadaist Hugo Kerstens declared: "the supreme and ultimate law of art is: to break all of its laws."[12]

Surrealists and dadaists added a critical dimension to montage. For this reason Brecht was able to acknowledge them as his predecessors: "These refined and complex painters are, so to speak, the primitives of a new art form. They try to shock the observer by hampering, confusing and disappointing his associations."[13] But Brecht was also aware of their weaknesses and points out the limitations of this kind of montage and estrangement effect: "Dadaism and Surrealism use estrangement effects of the most extreme kind. Their objects do not return from the estrangement."[14] This is indeed the problem of estrangement effects designed to produce shocks: unless they are to lead onto something that is beyond them, they tend to consume themselves instantaneously.[15] At best the shock becomes an end in itself (*epater le bourgeois*) and a thrill taken for granted in the expectations of the art-consuming public. "As far as results are concerned," Brecht remarks, "it finishes up as shock for entertainment's sake."[16] When Surrealism and Dadaism go beyond their critical program of dismantling art as a reified institution, they all too often reveal their fatal propensity towards the mystification of their objects and irrationalism.[17]

The cultural revolution, unless mediated with the political and social revolution, is always in danger of passing into the empty ritual of an aesthetic game. The surrealists must have realized this when they decided in the early 1930s to ally themselves with the Communist Party—necessarily a misalliance as the western CP's were already in the process of Stalinization. On the other hand, Russian Futurism had associated itself with the political and social revolution at an early stage and was therefore much more

11. See the illustrations 72, 73, 76, and 81 in R. Lebel, *Duchamp—Von der Erscheinung zur Konzeption* (Cologne, 1972).

12. Quoted from *Das war dada. Dichtungen und Dokumente*, ed. Peter Schifferli (Munich, 1963), p. 18.

13. *Messingkauf Dialogues, op.cit.*, p. 77.

14. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt, 1967), vol. 15, p. 364.

15. Cf. T.W. Adorno, "Filmstransparente," in *Ohne Leitbild. Parva Aesthetica* (Frankfurt, 1967), p. 84. Or, as Bürger points out (in *op.cit.*, p. 108), they may even have the backfiring effect of reinforcing the very attitudes they attack: by provoking them in an unspecific manner they give them occasion to manifest and consolidate themselves.

16. *Messingkauf Dialogues, op.cit.*, p. 78.

17. Cf. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke, op.cit.*, vol. 15, p. 366n. This feature in surrealism is emphasized to the exclusion of its progressive potential by Enzensberger, *op.cit.* For a balanced view, see P. Bürger, *Der Französische Surrealismus*, pp. 68ff, 117ff.

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successful in providing models for the reunification of art and life. Consequently, the experiments which developed from the futurist program collapsed when the Russian revolution degenerated into bureaucratic despotism.

Russian Futurism has shaped Eisenstein profoundly, and also influenced Brecht through Tretjakov, Arvatov and Meyerhold.[18] Both began their artistic careers with a radical critique of traditional theatre: Eisenstein as a futurist intended to destroy it, Brecht to change it radically. In consequence of his original futurist position, Eisenstein turned to a different medium, the film, while Brecht arrived at a fundamentally new form of theatre. Both aimed at an art-form in which, in Eisenstein's words, the "discord between the 'language of logic' and the 'language of image' " could be resolved. In other words, both sought the "intellectualization of art," of that sphere in which traditionally the emotional and the sensual held sway, but without negating the emotional-sensual component of art.[19] Most important: both realized their intentions by making montage the center of their new art-forms.

In Brecht's theatrical concept the principle of montage can be traced everywhere. If we define montage more precisely as the combination of different, often opposing moments resulting in not an *organic* unity, which absorbs its elements totally and dissolves their distinctiveness, but a *contrapuntal* unity, i.e., a structure which leaves its moments distinct and relatively independent by uniting them by counterpoint, then it can be demonstrated that Brecht's epic theatre is permeated by the principle of montage.

The very term *epic drama* is itself a montage, uniting as it does two concepts that traditionally would combine only for mutual destruction. This montage of concepts points to that fundamental montage in Brecht's dramaturgy: the contrapuntal combination of an epic and a dramatic plane in his plays. The epic plane—as constituted through the narrator, singer, songs, projected texts and the other familiar paraphernalia of epic theatre—renders the dramatic action which in traditional drama claims to be absolute, tolerating nothing beside or above it,[20] *relative to a wider context*. By losing its absoluteness, the dramatic action is historicized and distanced, and thus exposed to critical scrutiny, one of the intended results of the estrangement effect. The close affinity of Brecht's drama to film is found in this montage. It allows Brecht's drama to break the spatio-temporal continuum to which the dramatic action of traditional theatre is bound, and to move freely in space and time acquiring thereby the very advantages of the film which give it its rich scope of artistic means: the representation of simultaneous actions, flashback and even anticipation of future events (numerous examples can be found in *The Good Woman of Szechwan*, *Mother Courage* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*).

Furthermore, the montage of the epic and dramatic allows the cinematographic construction of already mentioned dramatic plots. Such an arrangement of the dramatic incidents follows the epic law of the 'independence of the parts' which produces an open form—*open* in more than one sense. The discontinuous element in the plot construction opens it to the critical intervention of the spectator[21] as opposed to the closed self-contained organic unity of the traditional 'Aristotelian' plot which absorbs the spectators by pulling them as passive objects into its field of gravitation. Further, it becomes open to the contradictions of reality which traditional theatre

18. On Brecht and Tretjakov, see H. Brüggemann, *op.cit.*, chapter 7, and Marjorie Hoover, "Brecht's Soviet Connection: Tretjakov," in *Brecht Heute—Brecht Today* (1973-4).

19. "Perspectives," in S.M. Eisenstein, *Film Essays*, ed. J. Leyda (London, 1968), p. 45.

20. P. Szondi, *Theorie des modernen Drama* (Frankfurt, 1959), pp. 12ff.

21. *Brecht on Theater, op.cit.*, "A Short Organon for the Theater," par. 67.

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cannot represent without harmonizing them in the end. This is in particular true of those Brechtian characters which form contradictory unities: Shen Te and Shui Ta, Anna and Anna (in the ballet *The Seven Deadly Sins*); Puntila drunk and Puntila sober—examples of yet another kind of montage: the montage of personal and social character masks. Likewise, Brechtian acting with its heavy emphasis on estrangement involves montage. It is based on "the principle that the actor appears on stage in a double role, as Laughton and as Galileo; that the showman Laughton does not disappear in the Galileo whom he is showing; from which this way of acting gets its name of 'epic'."[22] This montage of the showing subject and the shown object is the essence of the Brechtian style of acting and in its turn involves the montage of two perspectives: the perspective of the *dramatis persona* Galileo antithetically combined with the critical perspective of the actor Laughton. Like Wagner's 'integrated work of art' (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), Brecht's theatre unites several arts, the "sister arts of drama:"[23] poetry, music, stage design, costume making, mask making, painting, choreography. But unlike Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk,* Brecht's theatre does not make the other arts sacrifice their independence when they unite for the joint operation of producing a play: "Their relations with one another consist in this: that they lead to mutual alienation."[24] "The 'integrated work of art' appeared before the spectator as a bundle of separate elements."[25] Instead of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which the other arts "offer themselves up and are lost,"[26] we find the contrapuntal montage of distinct and independent moments. Adorno, doubtful though he might have been about film as art, once appropriately characterized its formal principle as that artistic procedure "which does not interfere with the objects, but organizes them into a script-like constellation."[27] This corresponds with the epic synthesis which constitutes the extensive totality of the epic world through the principle of the "independence of the parts."[28] Montage is essentially epic, a fact to which also Szondi's rather pejorative description of montage as "Fabrikware der Epik" points.[29]

In order to synthesize the various observations on montage in Brecht's concept of the theatre, I will briefly describe his *epicizing* of traditional drama as the replacement of organic unity by *contrapuntal montage.*

Traditional drama owes its organic unity and the nature-like quality which characterizes the growth of its world on stage to the despotic rule of the plot which absorbs and consumes everything connected with it. The aesthetic subject, playwright or director, vanishes behind the dramatic process on stage. Through identification, the actors give up their individuality and disappear in the dramatic characters they embody. By way of forced empathy, the audience is molded into an emotionally charged collective body and pulled into the dramatic action, while the sister-arts have to offer themselves up as handmaidens whose work indiscernibly passes into the staging of the plot. During the performance, the stage claims not to just mean, but in fact to be the world, negating all reality outside itself. Thus, organic unity is achieved

22. *Ibid.,* par. 49.
23. *Ibid.,* par. 74.
24. *Ibid.,* par. 74, 70.
25. *Brecht on Theater,* p. 134.
26. "A Short Organon for the Theater," par. 74.
27. T.W. Adorno, "Filmtransparente," *o.cit.,* pp. 84f. On montage and construction, cf. his *Aesthetische Theorie* (Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 90-92.
28. See my *Stilwandel in Homerischen Epos. Studien zur Poetik und Theorie der epischen Gattung* (Heidelberg, 1975), pp. 102-125.
29. P. Szondi, *op.cit.,* p. 108. This expression arises out of Szondi's view (similar to Adorno's) that montage disavows the aesthetic subject.

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through the ruthless subordination of all moments that constitute it, to the organic growth of the plot—a unity in which all distinctions are lost.

The replacement of the mimetic categories of necessity, probability and teleological determinism by the epic law of the independence of the parts makes the organic unity of traditional drama disintegrate into its components. In this process, these regain their distinctiveness and rearrange themselves into a new totality that gives them back their independence. Playwright and director are no longer conspicuous by their absence but make their presence and activity felt within the staging; out of the dramatic characters step the actors, reasserting their individuality. Being now positioned *vis-à-vis* the dramatic events, the spectators awake from the trance into which they had sunk as the collective audience and establish themselves as thinking subjects critically examining what is taking place on stage. Finally, the other arts are restored from their obscure status of handmaidens to that of sisters of equal rights. From this results a more comprehensive totality rich in inner differentiations. The all-dominating plot has been reduced to one moment among others. As all the moments unite and interact by way of "mutual alienation," the totality of epic drama can be said to be constituted through contrapuntal montage.

Thus, the core of the estrangement effect is montage. Montage unites phenomena to form an unfamiliar 'estranged' combination resulting in a shock-like experience which is to lead to a critical apprehension of these phenomena's structures. "That with which we are simply familiar," writes Hegel, "is for that very reason not intelligently apprehended."[30] Montage defamiliarizes the phenomena of our world and makes us understand them critically so that we become able to interfere.[31]

Brecht's concept of estrangement goes beyond the ambiguity of montage by giving it direction and perspective. It no longer consumes itself instantaneously, but is driven beyond itself and turned into an impulse for a critical understanding of the phenomena involved in the montage.In this way, montage develops into a device for the artistic destruction of reified reality and its corresponding consciousness: a reality which presents itself to consciousness as *natural* and therefore *unalterable*. The phenomena are freed from that stamp of familiarity and naturalness which protects them against our intellectual and critical grasp, and are thereby exposed as socially conditioned, i.e., *produced* through human praxis and therefore *alterable* through human praxis. Brecht's artistic procedure of "estrangement-montage" is aptly expressed in the following stanza from *The Playwright's Song*:

> I see the coming of the snows
> I see the earthquakes stepping forth
> I see the mountains standing in the middle of the road
> and I see rivers climbing over riverbanks.
> But the snows are wearing hats
> the earthquakes carry banknotes in their pockets
> the mountains have alighted from vehicles
> and the torrential rivers are in command of the police.

This stanza could easily pass for a dadaist poem—but Brecht adds the line "this I

30. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Frankfurt, 1970), p. 35. I have used A.V. Miller's translation quoted from his translation of *The Science of Logic* (London, 1969), p. 33n. In Baillie's translation (New York, 1967), the relevant passage can be found on p. 92.

31. "A Short Organon for the Theater," *op.cit.*, p. 46.

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reveal," which throws the stanza into a different perspective and gives it a critical-political direction. "Estrangement montage" destroys the phenomenal form of seemingly *natural* events and reveals them as *social* phenomena, as "men's own undertakings": montage as *demontage* of pseudo-naturalness and reification.

As has been demonstrated, the cinematographic manner of arranging the dramatic material according to the epic law of the independence of the parts allows reality with its discontinuities and contradictions to enter the dramatic work of art. Now the dramatic art-form designed to bring conflicts to their logical conclusion, namely their reconciliation and the restitution of harmony, is further *verfremdet* (alienated) by being alloyed with the epic element of the open ending, which leaves—e.g., in *Mother Courage* and *The Good Woman of Szechwan*—all questions unanswered and all contradictions unresolved. Such abrupt ending effects a shock in the spectator. Conditioned to expect harmony restored in the end, he is refused the gratification of his expectations and finds himself confronted with the problems the stage was supposed to solve for him. If this experience shocks the spectator into thinking and eventually into action, then the resolution of the contradictions, laid bare and made transparent in the play, is transferred from the aesthetic sphere to that sphere where it belongs: life and reality. Thus a process, set into motion by the work of art, moves beyond the boundaries of art and is continued and potentially completed in life and reality. In these open endings the work of art finally sheds its quality of the self-contained closed organic entity which sets itself aloof from everyday life. Instead it opens itself up to life in order to become operative in it as an independent force, an agent of change. In contradistinction to the immediacy of the avantgardist attempts at reconciling life and art, from which results the fatal inclination towards irrationalism so often found in Surrealism, Brecht's reunification has as its model the mediated Marxist unity of theory and praxis, and I would go so far as to state that Brecht's new concept of art may be regarded as the artist's version of this unity. With Brecht art allows itself to be informed by Marxian dialectics; Marxism, in its turn, instead of subjugating art to politics through a doubtful aesthetics and administrative force, should allow itself to be informed by art, even if it were but to learn that art can be truly revolutionary only if it is left free and independent.

Film montage, understood in its elementary sense as putting together a number of static photographs in order to produce an exact copy of natural movement, is only the given technical basis of the medium of film. The conventional practice of filmmakers to create smooth, 'seamless' sequences which hide the fact that they are the synthetic result of cutting and editing is a depraved version of the practical principle of traditional art (art as the concealment of art). Only a concept of montage devised in opposition to this practice could rise to the level of an artistic principle, and this was mainly the achievement of Eisenstein. It is hardly surprising that in doing so, Eisenstein tended to bring out the antithetical structure of montage, so that he arrived at a concept of *montage as collision and conflict:* "from the collision of two given factors arises a concept."[32]

This form of montage, however, was the result of a long development that began in the theatre. Like Brecht, Eisenstein made the dramatic illusion-effect his critical object at an early stage in his career. While still a futurist, he decided to destroy theatre from within through the *montage of attractions.* The dramatic plot is strained to the breaking point by powerful estrangement effects: the various parts of the plot

32. S.M. Eisenstein, "Collision of Ideas," in R.D. MacCann, *Film: A Montage of Theories* (New York, 1966), p. 34.

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are combined with all kinds of happenings, events, and acts *attracted* from outside so that the theatre is no longer able to provide through illusion and fantasy a substitute for life. From the theatre Eisenstein transferred the montage of attractions to the film. In the film *Strike* this kind of montage became a *montage of shocks*. It is true that the shock in particular and emotion in general play a much more important part in Eisenstein's art than in Brecht's, and this applies also to the much more intellectual *montage of collision*: the spectator must first go through an intensive emotional shock before he arrives at a concept or, in Eisenstein's words, a "generalized image" which is to arise from the montage of opposing moments.

But the shock is not an end in itself—this is the primary point that Eisenstein's film shares with Brecht's theatre. The shock is to trigger a process leading to an intellectual experience. The objective of Eisenstein and Brecht is to emancipate the spectator, with the structure of montage being particularly suited to this. As in Brecht's theatre, Eisenstein's spectator is not the passive object of the artist's emotional manipulation, but rather is to establish himself as a free subject both intellectually and politically.

The emancipatory potential of art could only be realized through its intellectualization: thus Eisenstein aimed at the *intellectual film*, and Brecht at the *theatre fit for the scientific age*. At the same time, both understood their art as a form of dialectics. The mediation of the "language of logic" and the "language of images" is based on the "language of film dialectics."[33] The "montage of collision" is an "imaginist transformation of the dialectical principle."[34] In like manner, Brecht understood epic theatre to be "dialectical theatre." It is thus no accident that the principle of montage found its artistic, critical, and political actualization in the aesthetic praxis of two artists whose art matured through mediation with Marxian dialectics.[35]

34. "Perspectives," *op.cit.*, p. 45.
34. Eisenstein, "Collision of Ideas," *op.cit.*, p. 35.
35. On Eisenstein's aesthetics in relation to Marxism, see my "Zur Filmaesthetik S.M. Eisensteins," in *Neue Kritik*, 17 (1963), pp. 16-21, especially the critical remarks toward the end.

# BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

## by Joseph S. Alper

In his *Novum Organum*, published in 1620, Francis Bacon codified the Renaissance belief, which still prevails today, that the true goal of science is the attainment of power;[1] that science should be used as a means to control and dominate the environment in which the human species lives. This use of science to alter the material conditions of our lives is obvious. It is not nearly so obvious that, particularly since the industrial revolution, science has also served as the tool of the dominant interests of societies to control *their* environment which has included the people they rule.

A vivid example of this is the new science of sociobiology. The theory of human nature provided by the sociobiologists is eminently suited to form the theoretical foundation of the present capitalist system. Every political and social system has had its theoreticians who created theories of human nature to rationalize their societies.

1. F. Bacon, *The New Organon*, in *Selected Writings of Francis Bacon* (New York, 1955).

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Aristotle, Aquinas, and Locke are examples from three widely differing historical settings. The striking fact about the new biological determinist theories of human nature is that they purport to be founded on firm scientific principles, thus granting them a legitimacy not awarded today to philosophers, theologians, or political scientists. In fact, the new scientific theories of human nature are no more valid than any of the theories proposed by nonscientists.

For the past two hundred years scientific and technological progress has had the effect of maintaining and increasing the economic and political power of the ruling class. In his book *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, Harry Braverman graphically demonstrated how technological progress in industrial operations has been consciously directed toward subdividing each aspect of production into such small units that workers no longer control their labor and that work is no longer a means for creative expression.[2] All decisions concerning the nature of the product and its method of production have passed to management; thus management now completely dominates the labor process in all highly industrialized societies.

The notion that even "pure" science progresses by means of unlimited free inquiry in all possible directions is a myth. Since nearly all science done in the first and second worlds is sponsored either directly or indirectly by large corporations or by national governments, the direction that research takes can be and is carefully controlled. There is, of course, much research that seems to be carried out for the sake of pure knowledge—e.g., elementary particle research in physics—although even here prestige for the sponsoring government and possible future military applications may be at stake. Of much greater significance for our society are, for example, the decisions to spend large sums of money to develop nuclear power plants instead of alternative energy sources and to sponsor research studying possible cancer-causing viruses instead of studying and removing the carcinogens in the environment, which cause an estimated 70-90 percent of all cancer.[3] These conscious choices made in Washington by granting agencies of the federal government have obvious far-reaching economic and social implications.

In addition to this direct control over society, science is also used to justify the rationality of political and social actions based on the conclusions of that science. This use of science relies on widespread acceptance of the certainty and value-free nature of science. The notion of the "objective truth" of scientific theories is, like the notion of unlimited free inquiry, a myth. It is commonly believed that the scientific method is an automatic truth-producing procedure. The theories that result from this procedure are thought to be completely independent of the investigator and the political and social environment in which he or she works. This positivistic view, especially as applied to theories of society, was criticized by such disparate theorists as Marx, Freud and Weber, who all realized the important influence of human activity. But it is only recently that philosophers of science have come to realize that even the "hard" sciences are not unique and objectively true descriptions of reality. Feyerabend has shown that scientific theories are rather the product of a particular mode of thinking operating in one particular historical epoch.[4]

The theories that most clearly demonstrate the possible use of science as a means of social control arise in the biological sciences, especially in those areas of biology

2. H. Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1974).
3. S.S. Epstein, *Cancer Research*, 34 (1975), p. 2425.
4. P. Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London, 1975).

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impinging on the study of human behavior. The fallacious theories purporting to show that the average IQ of black Americans is lower than that of whites because of primarily genetic differences arose in an attempt to explain the failures of various Head Start programs and to justify their elimination.[5] The equally fallacious theory of the XYY or "criminal chromosome" that supposedly predisposed certain males to a life of crime[6] is a perfect example of "blaming the victim," drawing attention away from remedial problems in society. Finally, the rash of books providing biological explanations for the social and anti-social behavior of people all have the effect of attributing ills to society to "human nature" and of leading to the conclusion that any attempt to improve society is chimerical. Such books as Robert Ardrey's *Territorial Imperative*, Konrad Lorenz's *On Aggression*, Desmond Morris's *The Naked Ape*, and Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox's *The Imperial Animal* all focus on various supposedly biologically determined human behavioral traits including aggression, competitiveness, male dominance, and societal hierarchies.[7] These traits are of obvious importance and value in maintaining the present male-dominated capitalist society but the evidence and argument for the truth of the theories presented never rise above the level of unproven assertions or inapplicable analogies with animal behavior.

All of the theories just mentioned illustrate both of these myths about science. These theories reflect the various pressures from society and government as well as possible subtle and not so subtle race and sex prejudice on the part of the investigators. It is clear that scientists manifest the prevalent ideology of their society. The fact that the evidence accepted by scientists is so weak and the reasoning so tenuous belies the notion of a scientific method which automatically cranks out correct theories. Science is not an isolated activity carried out in a vacuum; it must be studied and criticized not only by means of its own ground rules but also from the viewpoint of its historical and cultural origins.

We come now to sociobiology, the most recent and potentially the most dangerous theory relying on biological arguments. Sociobiology is the attempt to discover the biological basis for the social behavior of animals and humans. It can be said to have emerged as a recognized discipline of its own with the publication of Wilson's book *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*.[8] A leading authority on insects, Wilson had previously written a book *The Insect Societies*,[9] in which he discussed the biological basis for the social behavior of such insects as termites, ants, and bees. In his new book he has attempted to extend the concepts he developed and elaborated to other animal species including colonial invertebrates (e.g., Portuguese man-of-war and corals), primates and finally the human species. Nearly all of the attention that the book has attracted is focused on the introductory chapter, which outlines the program of the book, and the final chapter, "Man: From Sociobiology to Sociology."

The major conclusion of sociobiology seems to be that the social behavior of people, including such traits as sex roles, aggression, territoriality and altruism as well as the very basis of our competitive capitalist system, are largely determined by genes and

5. N. Block and G. Dworkin, *The IQ Controversy* (New York, 1976). This collection of articles analyzes nearly all aspects of this question.

6. See articles on IQ, XYY, as well as sociobiology in *IQ: Scientific or Social Controversy*, edited by the Genetics and Social Policy Group of Science for the People.

7. R. Ardrey, *The Territorial Imperative* (New York, 1966); K. Lorenz, *On Aggression* (New York, 1966); D. Morris, *The Naked Ape* (New York, 1967); and L. Tiger and R. Fox, *The Imperial Animal* (New York, 1971).

8. E.O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975).

9. E.O. Wilson, *The Insect Societies* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975).

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evolution. If these characteristics of our society are biologically determined, then the present structure of society is natural, thus justifying the status quo. It follows that not only is there little point, but possibly great harm, in trying to overcome sexism and aggression or in trying to change the present economic and social structure since the present society is a product of natural selection.

These arguments are reminiscent of those of the early 20th century eugenicists. Such arguments were used to justify the restrictive immigration laws of the 1920s which prevented "biologically inferior" non-Northern Europeans from entering the United States. After the Nazi genocide, such theories fell into disrepute. Because of the scientific seriousness of the present biological theories, the high professional reputations of their originators, and—most important—because of present social conditions characterized by severe and seemingly permanent inequalities, the concepts put forward have achieved wide currency and great influence. In the short period of time since the publication of *Sociobiology* in 1975, discussions of it have appeared in such periodicals as *The New York Times, Newsweek,* and *House and Garden,* in addition to various scientific journals. It is particularly alarming that this theory has already found its way into school curricula. For example, the Educational Development Corporation's text *Exploring Human Nature*[10] presents much sociobiological theory as proven fact.

The very first paragraph of the first chapter of *Sociobiology* sets the tone of the entire book. Wilson dismisses as wrong "even in the strict sense intended" Camus' observation that the only serious philosophical question is suicide. "The hypothalmic-limbic complex [of the brain, involved in producing emotional states] automatically denies such logical reduction by countering it with feelings of guilt and altruism" (p. 3). Wilson's statement assumes that the terminology and constructs of physiology are commensurable with those of psychology, that there are direct causal chains between emotional states and the underlying physiological states. In other words, it mixes levels in hierarchies of understanding by trying to explain emotional states in terms of biochemical mechanisms and is an example of poor reductionist science, the attempt to explain complicated phenomena arising from multiple interactions in terms of isolated mechanical models.[11] From this attempt to explain human emotional and behavioral traits in terms of biochemical and evolutionary theory, Wilson jumps to the attempt to explain human *social* behavior in terms of biological models. "The principal goal of a general theory of sociobiology should be an ability to predict features of social organization from a knowledge of these population parameters combined with information on the behavioral constraints imposed by the genetic constitution of the species" (p. 5). The "population parameters" referred to are demography and the genetic structure of populations and are defined by Wilson earlier in the paragraph in which the above quoted sentence appears. This program assumes that societies reflect merely the sum of the behavior of individuals and it ignores the effects of interactions among people. It also ignores the various aspects of society, e.g., established religions, that become institutions with a life of their own. Such a program seems to disregard culture, removes philosophical questions, and seeks to subsume the disciplines of sociology and anthropology into "The New Synthesis" under biology. "Whether the social sciences can be truly biologicized in this fashion remains to be seen" (p. 4), Wilson cautions us, but it does not seem likely that this massive

10. I. DeVore, G. Goethals, and R. Trivers, *Exploring Human Nature*, Unit 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1973).

11. S. Rose, *The Conscious Brain* (New York, 1976).

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sociobiology text, subtitled "The New Synthesis," would have been written if Wilson had not been optimistic about the prospects of success.

In spite of Wilson's repeated statements declaring that he is not a biological determinist and despite the hedges and equivocations in his book, sociobiology would be meaningless as a discipline if it were not a basically biological determinist theory. The role of biological determinism is the focus for the controversy surrounding sociobiology and, as we have seen, several other "scientific" theories of human nature. All of these theories have serious social and political consequences. For this reason and because the essential features of the arguments are often confused, it is important to discuss here various scientific views of human nature, with an emphasis on the biological determinist version. We thus focus our attention on the underpinnings of sociobiology. Detailed critiques of the content of sociobiology itself are available elsewhere.[12]

The biological determinism of the sociobiologists is only the latest phase of the perennial "nature vs. nurture" question. For centuries, philosophers and political theorists have been debating the question of whether human nature is fixed by biology and is thus inborn or whether there is no such thing as innate human nature but rather that human behavior is simply a product of the environment. Rousseau, who held that in the "state of nature" people were inherently good and were only corrupted by society, and Locke, who believed that people were born as "tabula rasa," are two of the most famous champions of the respective views. While it is not possible to fully discuss the history of this controversy, it is important to examine the current state of it if we seek to criticize and present alternatives to the characterizations of human nature presented by the sociobiologists.

Any observable trait exhibited by an organism (a phenotype) is determined by a complicated interaction between the gene or genes that are involved in that trait (the genotype) and the environment which includes all of the forces outside the organism that affect it starting from the moment of conception. Since it is impossible to isolate a genotype from the environment, it makes no sense to speak about the magnitude of the genetic component of a phenotype. One cannot say that 75 percent of one's height (a phenotypic trait) is due to heredity. It is even incorrect to say that the phenotypic trait of having two hands is purely genetic, since in certain environments—e.g., where the fetus is exposed to thalidomide—the child may be born without hands.

It is theoretically possible to separate the genetic from the environmental factors causing *differences* in a phenotype from one organism to another. One could in principle determine what fraction of the difference in height observed in people is due to genetic as opposed to environmental factors. The heritability of a trait is that fraction of the variation in a phenotype that is due to variation in the genotype. We have emphasized the "theoretically" and "in principle" because of the extreme difficulty in determining the heritability of any human behavioral trait and thus the suspect nature of any heritability estimate. A heritability can be computed only for a single given population (a group of people who breed among themselves) for the particular range of environments in which that population lives and for the particular time during which the study is conducted. Thus, bicentennial-era middle class white Americans form such a population. One cannot automatically transfer heritability values from one population to another. Furthermore, the determination of heritability values assumes that the genetic and environmental factors can be separated and that

12. See, e.g., Sociobiology Study Group of Science for the People, *Biosciences* 26 (1976), p. 182. Expanded version available from Science for the People.

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they do not interact with each other. It is probably impossible to make an accurate estimate of the heritability of IQ even for middle class whites since such factors as parental IQ, parental social status, childhood environment at home, and childhood education interact so strongly.

Sociobiologists are concerned with universals, traits common to all people and thus to all populations. They make the assumption that the various behavioral traits observed in individuals and in societies such as male dominance, aggression, "reciprocal altruism," territoriality, and tribalism are such universals. Furthermore, they postulate that these traits are to some extent innate, or more precisely, that they are characterized by moderately large heritabilities for all human populations. Normal variations in the environment have little effect on these characteristics; all variations in the characteristics are due to variations in the genotypes. From a consideration of the definitions of the various terms used in this field, it should be apparent that providing "scientific" evidence for such a biological determinist theory of human behavior is probably impossible.

Since biological determinism tends to justify the status quo, it usually assumes that the behavior of societies is simply a manifestation of the sum of the behavior of individuals which is biologically ordained. This assumption can be and is used by politicians to support the argument that a more just society is unnatural and doomed to failure since the differences in a society are caused by genetic and not environmental differences. Let us focus here on one instance that is very important in sociobiological theories and which vividly illustrates the characterization of human nature in sociobiology.

The unequal treatment of women in our society is often rationalized by maintaining that the purported psychological differences between the sexes are largely biologically determined. For example, in his book *Men in Groups*, Tiger,[13] a "pre-scientific" sociobiologist, introduced the concept of "male bonding," the biologically natural grouping of dominant males, implying that women joining men in high government positions or on corporation boards is an unnatural state that can lead only to chaos. This theory and the theories of Lorenz, Morris, and Ardrey, clearly fall into Wilson's category of "advocacy" and not "objective science." However, Wilson himself and the other "scientific" sociobiologists are equally guilty of advocacy, though in a much more subtle and sophisticated guise.

In his article of October 12, 1975 in *The New York Times*, Wilson states that in most agricultural and industrial societies, "men hunt and women stay at home." "My own guess," he continues, "is that the genetic bias is intense enough to cause a substantial division of labor even in the most free and egalitarian future societies." Very little evidence is given either in this article or in his book to support this guess and in addition, the works which Wilson does cite are accepted uncritically by him as scientific truth. Immediately following this sentence, Wilson refers to E.E. Macoby and C.N. Jacklin's *The Psychology of Sex Differences*,[14] which concludes that from age two on, boys are naturally more aggressive than girls and that this trait is biologically determined. Among the experiments referred to by Macoby and Jacklin to prove this point were studies that consisted of asking mothers whether they treated aggressive behavior in their sons any differently from similar behavior in their daughters. Since the mothers said that they punished aggressive behavior equally, it was concluded that males are "naturally" more aggressive. The flaws in this type of

13. L. Tiger, *Men in Groups* (London, 1969).
14. E.E. Macoby and C.N. Jacklin, *The Psychology of Sex Differences* (Stanford, 1974).

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experiment are almost too numerous to list and include assuming both the honesty and accuracy of the mothers' responses, the existence of nonverbal communication which might encourage aggressive behavior in boys and discourage it in girls, etc. These experiments and the other evidence used to prove the innate differences between the sexes are the subject of a brilliant critique by Naomi Weisstein.[15]

In view of the rather weak evidence supporting the hypothesis that the sex roles are biologically determined, Wilson's "guess" appears to be tenuous at the very least. It also seems very disingenuous for Wilson to conclude his paragraph by noting that even if the theory were true it "could not be used to argue for anything less than sex blind admission and free personal choice."

Diametrically opposed to biological determinism is radical environmentalism, the belief that there is no such thing as human nature and that all differences between people are due to differences in environment. By suitably modifying the environment any type of behavior can be produced or perceived to be normal. The most famous contemporary proponent of radical environmentalism, B.F. Skinner, claims that any desired behavior can be "reinforced" by using the stimulus-response technique.[16] Skinner's theories have been subjected to extensive criticism.[17] For example, Chomsky has pointed out that such concepts as reinforcement are not well defined and that theory has little explanatory predictive value.[18]

Radical environmentalism has had a great appeal for various groups on the left. It has been argued that if people are not restricted by their genes and thus if there is no such thing as innate human nature, both the behavior of people and the structure of society can be modified and improved. There are grave political dangers inherent in this view. Chomsky has pointed out[19] that if there are no real human needs or a human condition, then the state has license to dictate any behavior it deems proper and it becomes inevitable that the requirements of the state will prevail over the requirements of the people.

As in the case for biological determinism, there is no evidence to support radical environmentalism. There is evidence that some human characteristics such as language competence are genetically programmed and it is presumably possible that there are other innate traits as well. But of greater importance is the fact that a proof of radical environmentalism would entail showing that human behavioral traits are infinitely malleable; that under suitable environmental conditions one could make over the human behavioral phenotype into anything one wished. It would be necessary to demonstrate that any conceivable social organization is compatible with the biology of the human species.

Whether biological determinism or radical environmentalism is a valid description of human nature depends on the phenotypic plasticity of human behavioral traits. Biological determinism posits that humans are inevitably doomed by their genes to behave in a certain way irrespective of their history, whereas radical environmentalism posits that any imaginable human behavior is realizable. We have seen that in order to ascertain whether one or the other of these theories is true it would be necessary to study "scientifically" the role of genetic and environmental factors involved in various behavioral traits. In addition to the probably insuperable practical difficulties of such

15. N. Weisstein, "Kinde, Kuche, Kirche as Scientific Law: Psychology Constructs the Female," in *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, ed. R. Morgan (New York, 1970).
16. See, e.g., B.F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*.
17. See, e.g., S. Rose, *op.cit.*, pp. 347ff.
18. N. Chomsky, "Psychology and Ideology," in *For Reasons of State* (New York, 1973).
19. N. Chomsky, *Reflections on Language* (New York, 1975), pp. 128ff.

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a study are the moral questions involved in performing certain types of controlled experiments on human beings. In view of these difficulties, we can make the following statements about characterizations of human nature: There is no evidence now to support the contention of biological determinists that differences in behavior among people are due to genetic factors. Neither is there evidence to support the blanket assertion that differences in behavior are not caused by genetic factors. There are, however, vast numbers of anthropological studies of various cultures all over the world showing that many of the differences that have been observed in behavior are highly correlated to differences in the environment.[20]

In light of the biological and anthropological evidence, the nature-nurture controversy can be understood in terms of two types of evolution. Biological evolution ensures survival to the descendants of those animals who were more fit reproductively —i.e., were better adapted to the particular environment in which they lived. The traits that are passed on to their descendants are those that these better adapted animals were born with. Biological evolution can be contrasted with cultural evolution, in which acquired traits of one generation are passed directly to the next one. The Lamarckian character of cultural evolution enables human beings to adapt very rapidly to changes in the environment, much more rapidly than those species of animals that must rely on biological evolution, and has been of tremendous survival value for the human species.

Some remarks about the adaptive qualities of traits are in order at this point. The belief that all traits exhibited by an organism are adaptive and thus a necessary product of biological evolution is an outmoded relic of Darwin. Even assuming biological determinism, it would be an error to treat all forms of behavior as though they had survival value. When cultural evolution is considered in addition to biological evolution, one sees that even behavior which has negative survival value—e.g., the celibacy of monks—can be transmitted from one generation to another. It is apparent that the hypothesis of the importance of cultural evolution in explaining human behavior is not only supported by a great deal of evidence, but is also much simpler and more powerful a theory than strict biological determinism.

Cultural transmission of social behavior does not preclude the existence of a genetic component in all human behavioral traits. But society is not simply the sum of the behavioral traits of individuals; it is rather the product of complex interactions among people and the institutions of society. As Marx pointed out, people create their own nature in the context of the material conditions of society. He recognized the existence of both innate and environmental components of human nature together with their complex interaction. The innate components, which in any theory serve as the postulates necessary for the construction of that theory, are that the human species is fundamentally a social one and further that a person can develop humanness only in the context of society. "Man is no abstract being squatting outside the world," Marx wrote in an article for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. "Man is the world of man, the state, society." Out of this socialization process grows the essential character of human nature: the transformation of the external environment, which comprises the material conditions affecting people's lives, into a form that serves human life. This activity is called "unalienated labor."

The role of institutions of society in acting as further material conditions of existence transmitted by cultural evolution is spelled out in enormous detail and is, of

20. See, e.g., M. Sahlins, *The Use and Abuse of Biology: An Anthropological Critique of Sociobiology* (Ann Arbor, 1976).

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course, Marx's greatest contribution to political and economic theory. Human history, resulting from these interdependent factors, is a continuing process in which people shape their environment, the transformed environment modifies them, they in turn effect new changes in the environment, etc. In Marx's words from *Capital*: "By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature."[21] This nonmechanistic view of human nature, like those of the biological determinists and the radical environmentalists, is not a provable one. However, the realization of the potential that people have for changing their own nature, overcoming their environment, and revolutionizing the institutions of society is the necessary foundation for any progressive political thought.

21. These quotations appear in *Karl Marx*, by D. McLellan (New York, 1975), pp. 27, 36. A similar discussion of Marx's view of human nature is found in I. Meszaros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (New York, 1972), p. 146.

# THE FOOTNOTE FETISH*

## by Jon Wiener

A footnote appears, at first sight, a trivial thing, and easily understood. But in the pages of the *Social Sciences Citation Index*, these scholarly creations step forth as independent beings, endowed with a life of their own. The *Citation Index* is the most recent, and most titanic, achievement of the burgeoning information storage and retrieval industry. It is dedicated to the proposition that the best way to find out what an article is about is not to look at its title, but at its footnotes. As the publicity brochure explains, "no human indexer has to decide what is the subject of an article. The author of a new article indexes his own work through his references." The *Citation Index* thus "breaks the subject barrier." An author who footnotes sources you consider to be important ought to be consulted, and an article that fails to footnote the important sources probably is not worth reading. With this notion in mind, the *Citation Index* has taken on the herculean task of indexing the footnotes in 3,000 social science journals in 26 languages. You look up an author, and the *Index* refers you to all the articles, published in a given period, which have cited various works of his.

The *Index* lists something like 175,000 citations of 125,000 articles by 100,000 social scientists, and it does this every four months. In a year, it indexes around half a million footnotes from 80,000 articles. Of the 3,000 journals whose footnotes are indexed, 1,000 receive "full coverage"—every footnote to a different source is punched into an IBM card, fed into the computer, and published in the next issue of the *Index*. The other 2,000 journals receive "selective coverage" of the appropriately social-scientific articles they publish. In a four-month period, the average social scientist (of the 100,000 who are footnoted) has 1.2 articles cited, and he is cited on the average 1.7 times. In fact, a small number of scholars are cited hundreds of times a year, while the majority are cited once per issue.

The purpose of the *Citation Index*, according to its advocates, is not only to serve as a reference tool, but also to "identify" the scholars "who have had a major im-

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pact on their fields," those "who have truly influenced the course of science."[1] "True influence" and "impact" are measured by frequency of citation; the more often you are footnoted, the greater your intellectual contribution, the more valuable your scholarly work. To the extent that the *Citation Index* becomes an accepted measure of scholarly importance, it will play a role in promotion and tenure of college and university staff, alongside the more traditional methods of evaluation. As one citation authority has written, "it was a logical step" to use the *Citation Index* to "measure current performance of scholars." If a young social scientist is footnoted often, his work will be judged important and valuable by his superiors, and he will be promoted; if no one footnotes somebody's work that will be an argument for firing him. To paraphrase Thomas Hobbes: to be cited retularly, is felicity; to be cited most, bliss; and not to be cited at all, death.

All this may seem fanciful; it is not. The prestigious journal *Science* has run a series of articles arguing that the "quality of scientific output" of an author can be accurately measured by the number of citations he receives, that the number of citations provides the best available measure of the "value" of an author's work, that the "best" contributions are among those cited most, and the "least important" attract few, if any, citations, and that an author's "outstanding" work is the one that is cited most often.[2] An article in the British journal *Nature* claims that "valid correlations can be obtained between individual performance and citation counts;" ominously, this finding was reported in the *IEEE Transactions on Military Electronics*.[3] Such a claim may send a chill down the spines of assistant professors; what is this "performance" that military electronics experts have tied to our footnotes?

The potential of citation indexing for measuring academic status can be seen in a pre-*Citation Index* study of the *American Sociological Review*, comparing individuals' citation frequencies for 1958-62 with those for 1967-68 in the same journal.[4] The five most often cited sociologists between 1958 and 1962 were, in order, Durkheim, Parsons, Shils, Sorokin, and Lazarsfeld; in 1967-68, the top five were Lipset, Parsons, Merton, Etzioni, and Goode. Of the ten most often cited sociologists in 1958-62, only four remained in the top ten six years later.

The fastest rising sociologist for this period was Seymour Martin Lipset, who rose from 11th to first. Among those who dropped off the list of top 22 were not only Shils and Sorokin, but Max Weber himself. Durkheim also took a big fall, from first to 15th. Predictably, Parsons was the only one to remain at the top of the list for both periods. Fully 15 of the 22 most often cited sociologists in 1968-68 were not on the list for 1958-62.

The name Karl Marx does not appear among the 22 most frequently cited scholars for either period; one would have to conclude that his work had little "impact" on sociology, that it lacked "quality," and that it is not among the "best contributions" to the field.

The frequency of publication of the *Citation Index*—three times a year—offers the

1. Eugene Garfield, "Citation Indexing for Studying Science," *Nature* 227 (1970): 669-71. The Citation Index confirms with a vengeance Russell Jacoby's "A Falling Rate of Intelligence?" *Telos* 27 (Spring, 1976), 141-46.

2. Jonathan R. Cole and Stephen Cole, "The Ortega Hypothesis," *Science* 178 (1972): 369-70; J. Margolis, "Citation Indexing and Evaluation of Scientific Papers," *Science* 156 (1967): 1213.

3. Garfield, *Nature*.

4. M.J. Oromaner, "Contemporary American and British Sociology," *British Journal of Sociology* (1970): 329.

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potential of regularly updated measures of intellectual status. The computer could easily list authors in order of the number of their citations every four months; the sister publication *Science Citation Index* already lists the top 50 scientists each year in order of citation frequency. It is possible to rank-order all 100,000 social scientists three times a year. For an individual to move from, say, the 85,274th most often cited social scientist in May, to the 67,319th in December, would be an indication of intellectual growth and increasing status, a reason to go out to dinner, if not to ask for a promotion.

Of course almost everyone is cited once or twice, so it is only at the top that real distinctions could be made. This makes often cited social scientists something like professional athletes—citations are like home runs, citation rates like batting averages. Presumably there is a Babe Ruth of lifetime citations (Talcott Parsons?), and the academic world is waiting for the Hank Aaron who will challenge him (Seymour Martin Lipset?). The *Citation Index* can be used to identify fast-rising rookies, players at the peak of their careers, and over-the-hill performers, along with those who peaked too soon. The year-by-year pattern of citations provides a concrete quantitative measure of an individual's intellectual development: Professor X started his rise in '63, hit his peak in '70 with his most often cited work, and has been resting on his laurels ever since, having the same old articles cited, and slowly sliding downhill in the rankings. Intellectual styles are reflected in the patterns of citations: some authors are cited at a slow and steady pace, while others alternate flashy peaks with long troughs of inactivity (teaching? administration? mental depression?).

The *Citation Index*'s computer data bank is updated weekly. Dissemination of weekly changes in citation frequency rates and rankings could provide an extremely sensitive measure of intellectual status. One imagines the eventual establishment of a social science ticker tape, which would spread citation rates to the offices of deans and department charimen instantaneously. (A burst of noise from the ticker; the dean rushes over and reads off the sputtering tape, "Dan Bell up 6.")

The *Citation Index* can be used not only to see who has the most footnotes of all, but to compare the citation rates of authors of related works to see who has had the greater "impact," whose "contribution" to a particular area has been more "significant." For instance, if we consider theorists of comparative modernization, we find that Samuel P. Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies* was cited in 16 diferent articles in four months of 1973, Barrington Moore, Jr.'s *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* got ten, and Cyril Black's *Dynamics of Modernization* got only four. (Black need not despair; he might demand that his publisher advertise more, or bring out a cheaper paperback edition, to get more books in the hands of potential footnoters; simply insisting that his own graduate students footnote him more often could raise his citation rate considerably.)

Publishers of the *Citation Index* have suggested a further use for their product: citation frequencies should be the basis of awarding prizes, grants, and fellowships. The *Citation Index* will be useful for "efficient management" of "increasingly scarce intellectual and financial resources."[5] To further such use in the sciences, the *Science Citation Index* plans to rank the 20,000 most cited papers each year, and has listed the 50 most often cited authors in rank order each year.

If citation indexing becomes a basis for promotion and tenure, for grants and fellowships, the implications for one's own footnotes are clear. In the marketplace of ideas, the footnote is the unit of currency; to footnote an author is to cast a vote for his

5. Garfield, *Nature*.

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tenure or grant. One should therefore be judicious in his footnoting: footnote friends and don't footnote enemies. The most likely consequence will be an inflation of citations; as the importance of being footnoted becomes increasingly clear, each author will footnote more people—to gain their friendship and their footnotes in return. The average number of citations per author will creep up, and the standards will have to be revised to reflect the new footnoting practices.

One must remember that the median citation rate is around one footnote per scholar every four months. If one friend cites you in an indexed journal, you are listed in the *Citation Index*, and you avoid falling into that terrible class of the never-cited. Thus one should definitely footnote his friends (once in an article is all that counts), and do what is possible to see that they footnote you in return (send them offprints, suggest relevant references to your work, etc.).

The easiest way to avoid the dustbin of the uncited is to cite oneself. From the viewpoint of the citation indexers, this is perfectly kosher; for all the computer knows, another person with your name is citing you. (Indeed, if there is another social scientist among the listed 100,000 with your last name and initials, the *Citation Index* considers the two of you to be a single person, and intermingles your footnotes indiscriminately.) Every article of yours ought to cite your other published works—once is enough for each. However, it is undesirable if the only citations to your work come from yourself. This is not a substitute for friends' citations, it is merely a way of boosting your rate. To paraphrase Rabbi Hillel: if I do not cite myself, who will? And if not in this article, when? (To the question, "If I cite myself alone, what am I?" a sociologist of science has answered, "parochial, eccentric, mediocre.")

All of these procedures have been practiced with a vengeance by Eugene Garfield, founder and president of the *Citation Index's* parent firm [and also its publisher: the Institute for Scientific Information, in Philadelphia].

The *Index* lists 21 articles written by Garfield, which were referred to a total of 19 times in the indexed journals in four months of 1973. This puts Garfield high in the citation frequency rankings—higher than Robert Merton or Daniel Bell, for instance. Close inspection of his citations reveals the following: of Garfield's 21 articles, 13 are cited only by himself; of the 19 references to Garfield's *corpus*, 15 come from himself. That's a self-citation rate of 79%. And, of his 21 articles, nine were published in *Current Contents*, of which Garfield himself is founder, publisher, and editor. Perhaps, as president of the firm that publishes the *Index*, Garfield is entitled to take these liberties.

The *Citation Index* is intended not only to provide a quantitative basis for firing or promoting you, but also to refer people to your work. This has further implications for the structure of one's own footnotes. Potential readers, using the *Citation Index*, are led to your published work by your footnotes; thus the more footnotes you have, the more people using the *Citation Index* are likely to come up with a reference to your article. The key is not just adding more footnotes to your articles, but adding wide-ranging footnotes that may be only tenuously related to your topic. Even if a footnote is not altogether appropriate, someone may still be led to read your article as a result of finding its footnotes in the *Citation Index*.

These implications for altering one's own footnoting practices have further implications for journal editors and referees. Increasingly they will become the arbiters of what is a legitimate footnote and what is simply an attempt to advance a friend's work, improve one's own citation rate, or draw the attention of users of the *Citation Index*. It will be up to journal editors to permit, or to eliminate, such

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footnotes. (Those submitting articles might seek to avoid criticism of their footnotes with a few judicious citations of works by the editors of the journal in question.)

Citation indexing has more far-reaching implications for journal editors. The five-year cumulation of the sister publication *Science Citation Index* listed not just authors, but also journals in order of frequency of citation. Not surprisingly, one percent of the scientific journals received 24 percent of all the references, and six percent of the journals received half the citations. Half of all articles footnoted at least one of the 25 most frequently cited journals at least once.[6]

The same conclusion has been drawn about journals as about individual scholars: in the words of the leading advocate of citation indexing, "citation frequency reflects a journal's value."[7] He suggests that frequency of citation should be the basis of library subscriptions; citation frequency "provides a solid basis for cost-benefit analysis in the management of subscription budgets." To assist librarians in this task, the creators of the *Citation Index* also publish *Journal Citation Reports*, listing citations by journal instead of author. If a journal isn't footnoted often, it's not "useful to the scientific community;" it's not worth reading, and thus not worth a library subscription—which will make certain that even fewer read the more obscure journals.

Editors thus need to be concerned about the citation rate of their own journals, and ought to seek to avoid the downward spiral of a decreasing citation rate bringing about a decline among library subscriptions. The simplest method by which editors can keep their journal's citations rates high is to make sure each article in their journal footnotes other articles in earlier issues of the same journal. Editors would thus want to suggest the addition of appropriate footnotes in articles accepted for publication, or perhaps reject articles whose footnotes do not contribute to the citation rate, and thus survival, of the journal.

The *Citation Index*'s creators also believe the *Index* can help editors select articles for publication by providing standards to determine what constitutes up-to-date footnotes. Sociologists of science who study citation patterns have concluded that it is more scientific to footnote recent works than older ones. It is a characteristic of science, we are told, that "new contributions will supersede old ones," and this "should be observable in the distribution of footnote citations." We can tell that physics is more scientific than sociology because 50 percent of sociology footnotes were more than six years old. What is true of fields is also true of individual articles.[8] The *Citation Index* can provide averages to suggest what the acceptable "half-life" of references ought to be in a genuinely "scientific" work; presumably, editors of social science journals should look suspiciously on articles submitted for publication whose footnotes are primarily to works more than seven or eight years old.

The publishers of the *Citation Index* believe it can indicate "how each brick in the edifice of science is linked to all the others;" it will rewrite the intellectual history of social science, and the rewriting will be done by a computer. "In the near future a historian or sociometrist will be able to sit before a computer console and specify some starting point—a person, a word, a citation....The computer will respond by drawing or displaying a historical road map which will show...a graphical approximation of the history of that subject." The computer will do this by tracing citations back into the past. Talcott Parsons footnotes Durkheim and Weber;

6. Eugene Garfield, "Citation Analysis as a Tool in Journal Evaluation," *Science* 178 (1972): 474-75.

7. Garfield, *Science*.

8. Duncan McRae, Jr., "Growth and Decay Curves in Scientific Citations," *American Sociological Review* 34 (1969): 631, 634.

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therefore he was influenced by Durkheim and Weber. Parsons does not footnote Marx; therefore Marx's work did not influence Parsons. The computer console thus will dispense with such arguments as Alvin Gouldner's, that Parsons can only be understood as an attempt to come up with a conservative alternative to Marxism during a time of capitalist crisis.

The publishers of the *Citation Index* offer a wide range of other "information services." The "Automatic Subject Citation Alert" is an "individualized, computer-produced, weekly alerting service" which will send you the latest footnotes every week from 3,200 journals on a topic of your choice. You could, for instance, receive weekly listings of all articles in the 3,200 indexed journals which footnoted you. For those scholars at the low end of the citation frequency lists, this experience could be depressing: to be informed every week, month after month, that no one cited you this week.

*Current Contents* is in some ways the boldest of all the related publications; it is a weekly journal which consists solely of reproductions of the tables of contents of "the important journals." For this intellectual breakthrough, it received the first "Information Hall of Fame Award."

But there is one group of social science writers and editors that need not concern themselves with any of the foregoing: those whose published work appears beyond the pale of the indexed journals. No one punches their footnotes into IBM cards; no computer data bank contains the references in their work. In fact, the editors of the *Citation Index* made some curious choices about which journals to index and which to exclude. Among the 3,200 indexed journals selective coverage is given to such unlikely titles as *Mosquito News, Soap Cosmetics, Digestion,* and the *Tasmanian Journal of Agriculture*, but there is no coverage at all of journals like the *Review of Radical Political Economy, Radical America, Socialist Revolution, Telos, Insurgent Sociologist, Working Papers for a New Society,* or *Monthly Review*, to name a few. If a footnote to your work appears in *Commentary* or the *Public Interest*, you get counted; if it appears in *New Politics,* or *Social Policy*, or *Dissent*, you don't. Could it be that there is some logic behind these choices of the editors? Those who want their work to be indexed ought to ponder this question with particular care.

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# INTERNAL POLEMICS:

St. Louis
January 7, 1977

Dear Fellow Editors,

Since a number of people could not make it to the St. Louis Conference last week, and since some of those who did come were not altogether sure about what actually went on, it was thought that some sort of report would be appropriate. As most of you know, I used to write this kind of report more often, but the practice was discontinued: the reports either generated no discussion—to the extent that the report was aimed at *everyone*, no one in *particular* ever felt compelled to concretely confront it: typical case of abstract universality—or if they did, it was only because I had somehow offended someone—and this usually precipitated resignations, clarifications, attacks, etc., which took months to straighten out.

At any rate, about 15 of us met as planned December 29-31 and managed to discuss a number of important issues relating to the journal. Naturally enough, the discussion opened with a general analysis of what we have done so far. We all agreed that the journal in its present form was generally sound. While there was no need felt for any sharp departure from our present format, there was a consensus that we need to de-emphasize translations, encourage original contributions from North American authors, and deal with more substantial problems. Since no *Telos* meeting—no matter how small—can ever get very far without our ritual self-flagellation about the journal's political aloofness and obscurity, the charge had to be made and dealt with fairly early. This time it came from an observer at the meeting who is not very close to the journal. But unlike most meetings where these problems have generally been perceived as weaknesses on our part to be remedied as soon as possible, this time the issues of political relevance and obscurity received slightly different treatment. Without embarking on any defense of theoretical autonomy—as can be found in Adorno's *Stichworte*, where he meets this charge head-on—it was pointed out that the call for the unity of theory and practice, or for the immediate political relevance of theoretical discourse, presupposes a whole series of social conditions which no longer exist. Hence, the call is itself politically and theoretically abstract. It presupposes a relation between state and civil society typical of entrepreneurial capitalism when the limited role of the state presumably allowed for the immediate translation of theory into political discourse by allegedly relatively autonomous social groups. But in the administered societies of late capitalism—particularly in North America—individuality is so well managed by the state that it can respond only to pre-packaged slogans and concepts elaborated within the system's logic of reification. In such a situation, it becomes meaningless to address theoretical discourse to a nonexistent public sphere. Restricted to academic ghettoes, theoretical discourse becomes the peculiar dialect of a specific group of intellectuals whose personal histories or other idiosyncracies have made them (at least partly) immune to the epidemic of consumerism, bureaucratization, and mass cretinization rampant in everyday life.

To pretend to aim for a unity of theory and practice free of the institutional mediation from the state apparatus is, in this situation, a symptom of social unconsciousness and a lack of self-reflection. Whatever the theoretical discourse generated by academics—no matter how "abstract"—if it is even potentially relevant, it is automatically appropriated by the system as an instrument of internal control. In the age of one-dimensionality, the law of supply and demand lingers on only in the academies. Thus, because of their scarcity, theory and critique become valuable, market-

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able commodities. This need not mark the end of rational political discourse and of the project of human emancipation: it simply marks the end of an age—the age of entrepreneurial capitalism of which Marxism is the most sophisticated expression.

But rational theoretical discourse can perform its indirect regulatory function in late capitalism only if it retains its spontaneity and negativity. Thus, it must remain free and undistorted, which also means that it retain its basic commitment to social emancipation. Hence, *Telos'* efforts to sustain a rigorous theoretical discourse and a constant dialogue with Western Marxism and other radical traditions need no apology—especially when the demand for such an apology comes from those sectarian Don Quixotès still looking for salvation in the struggle to organize masses of Sancho Panzas who refuse to leave the windmills of late bourgeois hegemony for not altogether attractive Marxist promises of earlier forms of that same ideology. The historical wager whereby the system either integrates the emancipatory thrusts that it internally generates—thus remaining progressive in character—or fails to do so, thereby becoming vulnerable to them, is the predicament within which we should consciously operate. The tasks ahead concern the specification of *how* this logic operates and to what extent universal commodification is not only intrinsically unstable, but can only postpone the collective reconsideration of *the question of meaning* which, at present, ends up relegated to the domain of institutionalized religion. (Hence the suggestion that, while continuing in the present programmatic trajectory, perhaps *Telos* should investigate, among other things, the occluded emancipatory potential of religion, which, in contemporary society, is the only proper source for answers to questions of meaning, but which ultimately serves to privatize and trivialize these questions.)

The second question dealing with the difficulty and obscurity of what we publish is very much related to the question of political relevance. Of course, jargon and pomposity should always be eliminated—and our present policy of going through several drafts of whatever we end up publishing is meant precisely to do that. But all too often clarity is identified with simplification and vulgarization. And it is here that we should draw the line: there should never be any compromise of rigor and depth. If theory is to remain emancipatory, it must constantly go beyond the given context and the established mode of discourse. In this sense, it retains an element of originality which makes it difficult to uncritically assimilate. If it is to be meaningful and penetrate reified consciousness, theoretical discourse requires a struggle to be appropriated. To attempt to eliminate this effort completely debilitates theory as such. The only cure for incomprehensibility after all the jargon and pomposity have been eliminated is for the readers to smash their heads against the library shelves until—to twist a famous quote from Lukács—the resulting sparks throw light on what was previously obscure.

This raised another crucial question: why is it that the overwhelming majority of pieces that we receive for consideration is out and out junk, and even the occasional piece that exhibits some remote potential is always terribly written? Apparently, another manifestation of the phenomenon of universalized commodification is what Jacoby calls "the falling rate of intelligence" and a complementary inability to write. In fact, since nearly all of the material that comes in is hardly worth more than a laugh, it was suggested that we should stop accepting unsolicited manuscripts. A cursory examination of the last 10 or 12 issues quickly reveals that very little of what we have published has been unsolicited. Furthermore, even that tiny proportion that has managed to get published invariably turns out to be the weakest part of any given issue. However, refusing to consider unsolicited material would only intensify an already almost intolerable isolation. Such a move, it was decided, could be seriously entertained

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only when and if there are a great deal more *Telos* Groups operating all over the place.

The idea of having groups of people in various locations not only actively engaged in the running of the journal but also constituting intellectual communities sharing their work and even engaging in limited political efforts is very attractive—as an idea. In practice, it is not quite that easy. The idea of groups mediating between *Telos* and artificially constituted audiences in a context where the public sphere has practically disappeared (thus ruling out the traditional view of publishing for some pre-given audience waiting to critically receive whatever is thrown to it) was originally formulated at the very first *Telos* Conference in 1970. It was not until 1974, however, that anything even remotely resembling such a group came into existence in Toronto. The formation of such groups requires a great deal of energy and personal effort—generally more than even the most committed editors are willing or able to invest. It virtually requires that there be a pre-existing infrastructure of friendships and social relations among the people involved, the close proximity of all members of the group, a specific task to achieve, and a great deal of patience. In large cities such as Boston, where there is already a considerable cultural life and the normal pattern of anonymity can only be broken through a lot of work, it has been difficult to form a *Telos* group. Furthermore, in New York, where there is no room large enough to accommodate any two given egos without resulting in a three-way split, the project has never gone past the formation of study groups whose life-span seldom exceeds a month to five weeks. It was possible to form a group in Toronto only because the people there alerady shared a great deal, happened to congregate in the same general areas, and turned out to be personally compatible (for the most part). It may be possible to form groups in Kansas, Los Angeles, and Texas, if the theoretical and psychological winds blow in the right direction in the near future, but as things are now, it seems premature to re-organize the journal around the *Telos* groups.

The second day of the conference had been set aside to deal with particular problems of Marxism and critical theory. As the only one who is pretty well in touch with all of the editors, it was left to me to summarize what we have done so far and where I saw things heading. One of the most striking phenomena of the last two or three years has been that almost everyone of the people connected with *Telos* has been independently developing a fairly elaborate critique of Marxism—especially in the face of the disintegration of the New Left and the resurgence of various forms of sectarian orthodoxies. Thus, since everything in Marxism has turned out to be either wrong or trivial, maybe we should dump such a theoretical albatross and focus our attention on other, more relevant radical traditions. Very few of us still believe in the falling rate of profit, the inherent revolutionary character of the proletariat, the primacy of economics, the relevance of the base-superstructure distinction, the need for a political party, the heuristic function of the labor theory of value, materialism understood in any of the ordinary senses, the dialectic as a fixed privileged method to deal with social reality, or the ridiculous claims of "scientificity" for Marxism—to mention but a few of those commonplaces generally regarded as standard Marxist theoretical baggage. What had originally attracted us to Marxism—the project of human emancipation—has turned out to be only in the most superficial sense embodied in any of the various "Marxisms" that we have painfully rediscovered in the last ten years. Not only that, but many of us have re-examined the critiques of Marxism put forth by people such as Bakunin, Landauer, Castoriadis, Lefort, and many others whose work has become victim of both "bourgeois" as well as "Marxist" social amnesia, and have come to realize that the naive contraposition of a fundamen-

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tally sound Marx to a degenerate Second International, Third International, Marxism-Leninism, Stalinism, Maoism, Trotskyism, etc., is no longer tenable: the problem can be located in the sanctified work of Marx himself! We must stop blaming Kautsky, Engels, Lenin, or Stalin for "Marxism" in the effort to pump formaldehyde into a theoretical cadaver which, after all, died of a legitimate disease. Looking back over the last eight years, it can be said that our historical function has been primarily to provide Marxism with a decent burial. Unconvinced either by the Cold War ideology's vituperation of Marxism or by the crudities of official "Marxists," we undertook to exhume the body and perform our own theoretical autopsy. Not only did we find any number of possible causes of death, but we also discovered that what had originally attracted us to the Marxist project had actually been incorporated into a number of other traditions. Instead of remaining bogged down in sterile arguments with various dogmatic sectarian Marxist groups, it may be best to move on, looking forward to more fruitful directions.

The situation with critical theory is immensely better but still unsatisfactory. As in the case of Marxism, many of us have been developing objections to critical theory for its lack of a foundation, for its holding on to a ridiculous theory of mass culture, its uncritical retention of precisely the same objectivism and base-superstructure approach that it had denounced in Marxism, for sloppily wavering between Hegel and Kant behind a façade of stylistic brilliance, for resuscitating Freud in an effort to provide critical theory with a biologistic foundation, for having produced a Habermas, etc. The superhuman effort to capture the totality in every single sentence (which also requires superhuman effort to understand it), the bypassing of an already ruled out theoretical elaboration by means of enigmatic aphorisms, the constant recourse to a cultural heritage that none of us will ever be able to fully master—at least in the same way—has not led us back into a new version of orthodox Marxism, as it did Krahl and most of the German New Left. Yet, it has not provided us with any meaningful approach to our social reality. For some of us, critical theory has turned out to be the theory of American society during its phase of transition to late monopoly capitalism, elaborated in theoretical hieroglyphs by emigrant intellectuals unwilling to make their insights immediately intelligible.

All of this may very well sound like the furious sawing off of the limb that we're sitting on. But it could also be that the branch has been dead for years and that to revive its spirit, we may have to sink our roots elsewhere—fully aware of the tradition of our past, but no longer caught in obsolete formulations that prevent us from continuing that very spirit which originally generated them.

It does not follow from this that our dialogue with Marxism, critical theory or the "tradition" broadly understood, is over. Far from it. It does mean, however, that we should begin to extend our analysis into certain crucial areas which so far we have hardly broached. Three such areas are bureaucracy, social democracy, and world hegemony. The realization of our embeddedness in the fully administered society should allow us to thematize our predicament and, by locating it in the logic of the system, bypass that abstractness which has beset critical theory and Western Marxism for the past half-century. Take the problem of bureaucracy: with few exceptions—notably the ex-*Socialisme ou Barbarie* people focusing on Eastern Europe and the Russian experience—there is no systematic analysis of bureaucracy as the most expedient way to maintain institutions that have lost their organicity and that can be kept alive only by formalizing and enforcing what had been either spontaneously dealt with or altogether unproblematic in the past. Bureaucracy is always a symptom of an

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internal crisis and a stop-gap attempt to forestall the kind of structural changes that would re-establish the lost organicity. Sartre, more penetratingly than anyone else, confronted this problem in the latter sections of the *Critique*, but short-circuited his analysis through his ridiculous theory of institutions as parasitic on the engaged monadic consciousness whose active parabolic trajectory eventually dooms them to formalization to prevent an otherwise inevitable disintegration. The real problem seems to be even more discouraging. Institutions tend toward fixity because of their very constitution, thus embodying a kind of built-in obsolescence which translates into bureaucracy in the normal course of institutional life. But in maintaining an artificial organicity which guarantees their fading viability, bureaucratizing institutions also have a deactivating and depoliticizing effect on the people entangled into their networks. The result is not only an increasingly clumsy and inefficient set of over-bureaucratized institutions, but a civil society composed of people more and more unable to do anything about it within the existing framework. It is at this point that the totally administered society finds itself forced to reform itself piece-meal. But these reforms turn out to allow precisely the free space within which the otherwise obliterated emancipatory spirit can thrive. The cunning of reason once again forces an unexpected reconciliation between the system and its enemies whose poisonous thrust becomes medicinal when taken in small dosages and under controlled conditions.

Politically, this precipitates the need to re-examine the old discredited notion of social democracy. One thing that we all agree on: whenever we hear talk of dictatorship—whether of the proletariat, the party, the people, the aristocracy, or of Zarathustra—we reach for our guns. The complete collapse of the Marxist-Leninist model forces us to seriously rethink what kind of institutional arrangements can allow for the maximum negativity to develop. In our present situation we are forced to uncompromisingly defend all of the so-called "bourgeois" freedoms against both bureaucratic as well as political encroachment. In contraposition to the deadening social democracies of Northern Europe based on the classical German model, it may be useful to examine the new multidimensional forms of social democracy presently developing in the Italian, French, and Spanish communist parties. This re-examination is not a camouflaged search for an historical *positivum* upon which to entrust the project of human emancipation, but an attempt to come to grips with new possibilities and new departures.

The third theme, world hegemony, is a result of the first two. The bureaucratization of everyday life and consciousness is carried out by means of the most advanced forms of scientific rationality which tends to overwhelm all residual cultural alternatives not only in the Third World but also in the Second one. Cokes, IBM computers and xerox machines produce much more efficiently the very same results previously safeguarded by the Marines and the Air Force. The brutality of the old imperialism gives way to the hypnotizing brilliance of modern science and technology while reinforcing imperialist relations of domination and dependence. Far from being the exceptions, the Idi Amins may be the wave of the future for the Third World, caught as it is in the frustrations resulting from having internalized Western consumerism while at the same time unable to satisfy it in a context of growing underdevelopment. As long as the Third World remains irresistibly drawn to the "American way of life" of blue jeans, shiny cars and the youthful euphoria so successfully marketed by Madison Avenue, the scientific and technological rationality necessary to mass produce even a minor corner of that ideological picture will guarantee multinational corporations' steady growth and an increasingly larger gap in the present rate of unequal exchange between the

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U.S. and the rest of the world. What this means is increasing fascism in the rest of the Third World, ruling out any significant emancipatory thrust—which explains the impact of Carter's "human rights" strategy which, having no possibility for realization, can therefore pay immense ideological dividents at no political cost. The future of humanity is being decided and will continue to be decided in the advanced capitalist countries. Our critical aim should consequently remain focused there.

Contrary to expectations, instead of this generating a barrage of defenses of the rapidly falling idols, what followed my talk was Schmidt's charge that maybe I had not gone far enough—at least with critical theory. His point was that the very basic distinction between traditional and critical theory was no longer tenable. Not only has critical theory lost any foundation to justify its distinctive character, but it is pretentious to claim that people such as Simmel, Weber, Tönnies, and other allegedly traditional theorists are any less reflexive than either Marx or Horkheimer concerning their presuppositions, social position, etc. In a situation such as ours where the general tendency is toward anti-intellectualism and away from theory, to do *theory as such* is itself political. The de-emphasis of Marxism and critical theory should allow us more time and energy to divert to a rediscovery of other radical traditions which, although non-Marxist, may turn out to be immensely more relevant.

This brought us to lunch time, which gave some of us time to think about the morning's discussions. Unfortunately, during the afternoon and evening sessions, when doubts were raised about the dumping of Marxism, I found myself trapped in the Bermuda triangle: between Paul Breines fumigating the place with his double coronas, Wodek chain-smoking Winstons and Jean Cohen puffing away on whatever she could bum from Wodek. All that I can recall is an impenetrable cloud of smoke pierced occasionally by demands that we deal with culture, include more debates, and expand the various groups.

The discussion during the rest of the evening concerned the embarrassing ping-pong defeat of the Canadian national team (represented by Fekete and Szemberg) by Pat Murray and myself; the surrealist chess game between Breines and Schmidt which at one time found Breines running out of room and moving off the chess board, Schmidt chasing him with mercenaries borrowed from another nearby chess set—only to be checkmated by Breines' secret weapon (a bottle of whiskey hidden in his coat pocket).

The conference closed the next day with a party (non-Leninist) and a discussion of various particular problems with reviews, short journal reviews, and major articles. Although no major policy decisions followed from all of this, what resulted was a better understanding of what we are doing and a much better sense of collective identity. It was generally felt that we should meet more often—next time maybe in Ohio in the spring, and perhaps in the East in the fall—but that the next time, we should try to deliver papers that would force us more directly to deal with specific issues.

Not only is there much that I have failed to mention, but other people who were present may have different perceptions and criticisms of what went on. I encourage all of you who were present to send in your specific comments, criticisms, and commonplaces, and all of you who couldn't make it to add your two-cents worth.

Wishing you all a happy new year,

Paul Piccone

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Austin, Texas
January 25, 1977

Dear St. Louis *Telos* Group,

Enclosed you will find the set of theses—slightly revised—that I discussed at the December conference:

1. Horkheimer bases his distinction between critical and traditional theory on the differing treatment each gives to "real necessity" rather than to any differences in the "logical necessity" present in statements in either tradition. That is, both traditional and critical theory employ deductive arguments of a certain level of abstraction. But, while traditional theory treats its concepts according to what has been termed "methodological nominalism," critical theory argues that its logical categories express actual forms of social existence. (In addition to the argument of "Critical and Traditional Theory," cf. the use made of the Durkheim-Mauss essay on Primitive Classification in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.)

2. Since critical theory adheres to a "conceptual realism" it views its own theoretical interventions as a contribution to the process of social formation (*Bildung*: cf. my paper in *Telos* 24). Critical theory seems to claim that its attainment of theoretical clarity parallels the coming to consciousness of a social group with the potential of altering social forms. While this group may lag behind the level attained by theory, some type of parallelism must be preserved, otherwise the force of "real necessity" will be lost and it will be impossible to distinguish critical from traditional theory.

3. This in part explains the attitude critical theory has held toward other theoretical traditions (i.e., to "traditional theory"): they are either *expressions* of earlier forms of social existence or *anticipations* (in the realm of imagination or fantasy) of future social relations. This necessitates a modification in my summary of Horkheimer's position (point 1): *all* theories are in fact expressions of actual social relations (it is here that the reliance on a modified version of the Durkheim-Mauss thesis comes to the fore) *but* only *critical social theories* are *consciously aware* of this fact, while traditional theories remain unaware of this fact, for any of a variety of sins (naturalism, idealism, mysticism, objectivism—to name only the more popular explanations).

4. Despite Habermas' considerable alterations of the project of critical theory, he has not been able to free himself from the general locus of the discussion. Theory is still claimed to be an intervention into formative processes. "Traditional theory" is now differentiated into two distinct sets of "learning systems" while critical theory is given the responsibility of being consciously aware of itself as part of the social learning process, critically evaluating the claims of the two other subsystems (*Knowledge and Human Interests*).

5. But, under criticism, it has been necessary for Habermas to withdraw from the more extreme position of *Knowledge and Human Interests* that the emancipatory interest realizes itself directly through reflection. The distinction between "reconstructions" and "reflection," which is introduced by Habermas at this point, is of importance to our consideration of the demarcation problem in that it represents a hedging of bets: reconstructions can perhaps eventually serve reflection, i.e., an evolutionary theory of social evolution can perhaps become an actual constitutive element in the process of social evolution.

6. The problem which emerges can be put rather simply: Can reconstructions claim to be critical as opposed to traditional theories in any meaningful sense? Unless the proposed theory of social evolution (which now seems to be the fallback position for

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maintaining the viability of the ideal speech situation) can claim "real necessity," it falls under what Horkheimer had termed "traditional theory." And it seems impossible to claim anything stronger than logical necessity without falling into objectivism (*at times* Habermas' discussion of social evolution seems to veer in this direction).

7. What seems to emerge from this is the impossibility of making a firm and hard demarcation between critical and traditional theory. The notion that critical theory is somehow distinguished from other efforts at social interrogation by any distinctive approach to "necessity" creates more problems than it solves.

8. *Within* the realm of traditional there are distinctions that can be made: for instance, the extent to which a theory is reflective on its own origins and presuppositions. But these types of distinctions can hardly be claimed as things only critical theorists have worried about.

9. One imperative that emerges from this is an investigation of what is viable within the broad tradition of social theory: the notion that Weber, Simmel, Tönnies, Ferguson, Vico (fill out the list with your favorites) were somehow less aware of the historical rootedness of their efforts to understand society is a bit of nonsense critical theory must free itself from.

10. The other implication is that the long wait for the subject which will eventually redeem the critical theorist's pretension to "real necessity" should perhaps be ended.

James Schmidt

Gainesville, Florida
January 18, 1977

Dear *Telos* Editors,

I, like other editors, have received from Paul a written report on the last *Telos* meeting in St. Louis at the end of December. This, plus a telephone conversation with Paul, is my only source of information about what went on. My first reaction was some amusement at the statement's confusion but a tacit agreement with it at a general level. However, some thought and rereading (especially in view of what is emerging in other left-overs from the New Left) raises the responsibility to clarify the basis of disagreement and, in short, cut the pollyanna nonsense of celebrating a consensus. There is always an issue in such replies that I am seeing the meeting wholly through Paul's mediation—in this case that is precisely the point. It seems that if this is what really went on, then *Telos*' so-called critical theory is nothing but cream puff but I know from Paul's conversation that there was a real dialogue and I am sure that those who opposed what is called a "consensus" in this letter didn't use the ridiculous arguments Paul quotes as the opposition. But the deeper issue is that, whatever went on, this is the theoretical-political mold Paul wants for the journal, a view—to be discussed below—around which I think there is no consensus.

First of all, the statement is filled with either wholly confused or wholly ideological arguments—the classic example of both being the argument from "obsolescence." One only has to look at Jacoby's analysis of this concept on *Social Amnesia* to see how it works—"the theorist not only distances himself from the messy past but can pride himself on his up to date appearance and of course much more radical, much more critical attitude. This is not an advance—it is a regression and if we really believe in such an ahistoric attitude then the regression is precisely the function of ideology." I mean in what sense is Marx obsolete—in the sense of a 1958 textbook in sociology, in the

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sense of Samuelson's comment that Marx was a second-rate neo-Ricardian, in the sense of *Beyond Marx and Jesus* (Rocky's favorite book, by the way), in the sense of Merleau-Ponty's, Sartre's or the other philosophical critiques—is the labor theory of value "obsolete" because of the Sraffa neo-Ricardian, because of Marginalists, because of theories of the state like O'Conner? What are we talking about and who are we talking about? Doesn't this strike us all as smashing radicals? We are *so bad*, we've even booted Marx in the ass! We should all know how easily that turns into its opposite—how false abstract radicalism becomes. To put it simply—I continue to find Marx's thought powerful and important though certainly not every bit and certainly not in the form in which it is consecrated by orthodox Marxism (I shouldn't have to say that but it is obvious from the letter that Paul attributes arguments against certain positions as only coming from crude "nuts and bolts" Marxism). The reason Marx remains in our vantage point is that we still live in a capitalist society and *even where Marx is wrong, limited or naive he is a hell of a lot more stimulating and important than the kind of garbage that parades around today as social theory.* We all know *Telos's* view of the history of Marxism and specifically Soviet Marxism. Why should that statement allow Stalin to define what Marxism is? And why should we ever be concerned with being up to date or being past thinkers who are "obsolete?"

And then we have the infamous theory-practice question. Here the letter takes on a real tone of conceit as it must lower itself once again to deal with this tiresome (!) objection—as though these theoretical gnats keep pestering us with their buzzing needling about our politics preventing us from doing our grand work and forcing us to turn our theoretical howitzer to the demeaning task of blowing them away. Again the letter uses the technique of setting up a crude Stalinist alternative of theoretical subservience to practice which it easily obliterates. But is this really the issue? If the relation between theory and practice is contradictory, mediated and historical (which is what the letter argues and is, by the way, entirely consistent with Marx's conception) then there is no *immediacy* of contact with theoretical and political practice. But the conclusion to be drawn is *not* that pure theory is the best political act—this is a pure *non sequitor. Telos's* value when it was "young"—unfortunately it seems to be aging fast—was that it was uncompromisingly radical in its view of Marxist politics and theory—and it correctly understood that such a position *encourages* rather than discourages theoretical work. What the letter offers is a lot of rationalization and electicism. In addition the letter concludes that theory is integrated into late capitalism—in other words arguing both the extreme integration thesis and theoreticism both at the same time further muddying the waters. Also the less said the better about that sad sack list of "alternatives" or the fact that having declared *Telos* against theoretical obsolesence the letter welcomes work on "traditions" outside of Marxism. *Telos* has always been interested in such studies but never as a guard against the threat of obsolesence.

It is, however, the last section of the letter which is the most bothersome. Here in another inconsistency—after all this stuff about theory—*Telos* is offered political immediacy in the name of Euro-communism. I believe this emerges from Paul's own position as evidenced from his paper on Mediterranean communism. Whatever the impact of European social democratic movements, I, for one, don't plan to suddenly trade in on a new set of uncritically adopted politics on the mere fact that it is anti-Soviet. No more illusions, no more myths and no more ideological discourse—those should be our slogans, not to mention "Down with electicism!"

Robert D'Amico

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Buffalo
January 18, 1977

Dear *Telos* Editors,

I. The general rejection of Marxism as a doctrine (apparently) is puzzling and unclear. Among others, we have developed critiques of Marxism which are increasingly coming to include Marx as well as Lenin, the Second International, Stalin, etc. However, *the tenets of Marxism listed*, which most of us are said to reject, are mostly attributable to Lenin, Plekhanov, or others; or at best to Engels—not to Marx. Again later it appears that what has collapsed is Marxism-Leninism, not Marx's theory (and I don't think anyone suggests that these are identical). Thus, the completely unsupported assertion that the disasters of the Second International, Stalin, et al., can be traced directly back to Marx's work is made even less comprehensible by its insertion into rejections of Marxism-Leninism rather than rejections of aspects of Marx's theory. In any case, convincing or not, the fundamental assumption here, that "the problem" with all the subsequent theoretical and political developments of Marxism can be traced to Marx's theory, is only an ahistorical way of annihilating all distinctions between revolutionary and conciliatory currents in Marxism by straightjacketing its whole history in our own hindsight. Such a critical rejection of Marxism would regress to a pre-Marxist mode of understanding, and would be unable to comprehend its object.

It's preplexing to read that we have been "bogged down in sterile arguments with dogmatic sectarian groups," since to my knowledge, on the contrary, we have avoided such debates like the plague. Also, since we are claiming to have developed "a fairly elaborate critique" of Marxism, how can we be "caught in obsolete formulations which prevent us from continuing that very spirit which originally generated them?" The only coherent conclusion here would seem to be that the critique is equally as obsolete as Marxism.

From all this one could legitimately get the impression that *Telos* consists of a Marxist-Leninist sect which is now trying to switch religions. (And *what* are the "promising alternatives," etc., which keep being invoked?) The implication is that Marxism has been an ideology for us; and both that implication and the type of argument through which "Marxism" is then rejected are very foreign to my experience and understanding of the theoretical work associated with *Telos* and of its political assumptions and implications.

II. Specifically, the notion of the "unity of theory and practice" is rejected. This argument begins by introducing the idea of an "immediate political relevance of theoretical discourse" as the *equivalent* of Marx's notion of a theory-practice dialectic. However, it is simply not true that Marx conceived the relations between theory and political activity in terms of "immediate relevance" in either direction. Whatever "relevance" means, it's not a concept Marx can be accused of using. This red herring is then rejected because, in the intensively "managed" civil society of advanced capitalism, the historical ground of this "unity of theory and practice" has been destroyed, rendering it politically and theoretically abstract. That argument appears to me to be based on something difficult to distinguish from Marx's notion of a dialectic of theory and society; and I agree with it except that I do not understand it as an argument against Marx. In fact, this purported rejection of the "unity of theory and practice," which culminates in the rejection of Marxism *tout court*, is actually a Marxist argument against a concept which Marx never espoused.

III. The report expresses the predicament of theorists and theory in advanced

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capitalism in a way I generally agree with. However, the resolution suggested for that predicament is disastrous. The core of this argument is: "Whatever the theoretical discourse generated by academics—no matter how 'abstract'—it is automatically appropriated by the system as an instrument of internal control. This. . . marks the age of entrepreneurial capitalism, of which Marxism is the most sophisticated expression. But rational theoretical discourse can perform its indirect regulatory function in late capitalism only if it retains its spontaneity and negativity. Thus, it must remain free and undistorted, which also means that it retains its basic commitment to social emancipation." Now, if we insist on understanding theoretical work in terms of its appropriation by capitalism, then evidently Marxism is not so obsolete after all. Or, if it is, then that sort of understanding of theory is obsolete and useless. I still don't understand how Marxist arguments can be used to argue against Marxism. But granting, despite this self-annihilating argument, that emancipatory theory is necessarily functional within late capitalism, then how does it retain its "spontaneity and negativity," remaining (?) "free and undistorted?" A social activity which is integrally functional to advanced capitalism doesn't develop completely independent of that system—it seems ridiculous to be pointing this out. This notion of the *inherent purity* of theory *per se* is just the most self-serving cop-out imaginable.

IV. So far, Marxism has been rejected as obsolete for reasons which are far from clear, and the dialectic of theory and practice has been rejected in favor of an integrated negativity which creates emancipatory possibilities by strengthening the system. Next comes a renewal of interest in social democracy. Somehow, all this has an oddly familiar ring. "(R)eform turns out to allow precisely the free space within which the otherwise obliterated emancipatory spirit can thrive." "The complete collapse of the Marxist-Leninist model forces us to seriously rethink what kind of institutional arrangements can allow for the maximum negativity to develop. . . it may be useful to examine the new multidimensional forms of social democracy presently developing in the Italian, French, and Spanish Communist Parties." On the face of it this doesn't make much sense. There's nothing new about the collapse of Marxism-Leninism, nor does that collapse provide any particular reason to become interested in social democracy, especially since it is also thoroughly bankrupt. In addition, "multidimensional forms of social democracy" seem to be of dubious "usefulness" in the U.S. political context, where there is only one dimension. Finally, if we have rejected any "immediate political relevance of theoretical discourse," then why do we give a damn about this "usefulness?" The answer seems to be that, according to the above notion of the role of emancipatory theory in advanced capitalism, it *requires* some sort of social democracy in order to exist. Whatever else could be said about it, this conclusion lands us neatly back in the swamp of "the immediate political relevance of theoretical discourse."

V. Although I agree with most of the rest of the report, the general thrust of what I've tried to criticize disturbs me, especially if it does in fact give a good picture of what went on at the conference. Although I believe that the efforts toward critiques of Marx have been one of the most important thrusts of the journal, I find the critique of Marx in the report to be ill-founded and mind-bogglingly contradictory. The specific attack on a rational theory-practice relation is likewise highly incoherent, starting out in self-contradiction and also ending up in it. The dilemma of theorists is resolved in a way which appears to be in contradiction with the first two (contradictory) positions, but which goes hand in hand with an expression of interest in reformism. The latter, however, is clearly a treacherous ground for emancipatory theory to plant itself in;

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and the convolution of these arguments seems to result from the fact that they attempt to frame a rationale for such a grounding. The end result is a programmatic attempt to conceive the theoretical project in a way which has immediate political relevance. Yet, as we know, that's impossible. By conceiving theory undialectically, instead of getting beyond Marxism we get trapped in capitalism; in this way theory not only becomes self-contradictory but, specifically, comes into contradiction with its own goal.

The passing of the form of capitalism in which Marxism is grounded does not indicate to me that we should therefore abandon the only comprehensive theory of capitalism which exists—even if it has serious shortcomings. If emancipatory theory lacks a social subject, the problem cannot be solved by a series of flimsy rationalizations which point squarely in the direction of opportunism. That, it seems to me, would be the result for theorists who, despite their knowledge that they can't avoid participating in the system, insist on regarding theory as "pure and undistorted:" the theory, with its "emancipatory" goal, has then *joined* the system—obviously: any real negation would *have to be distorted.*

Bart Grahl

Budapest
January 31, 1977

Dear Paul,

I'd like to comment in some detail on the preliminary draft of the *Telos* Conference report. It is an important document that I read with ambivalent feelings, but not because of my sclerotic orthodoxy.

As you know, our circle belonged to the very few who, relatively early on, perceived that it was not the second regional secretary in Tula who harmed the otherwise infallible Marxian theory, but that there were contradictions—irreconcilable ones—in the body of the doctrine itself. Accordingly, we first experimented some 15 years ago with a contrast between the early and the later Marx, and then went on to plead for a pluralism within Marxism. Some of us (Markus, for example, in his book attacking the very core of Marxist "science"—i.e., critical economy—or Heller, in her book on the Marxist theory of needs, or Vajda in many articles, etc.) advocated heretical views at that time unacceptable to many members of the *Telos*-milieu. This is only to testify that our thinking is itself no virgin soil with respect to the critique of Marx.

On the other hand, the offhand fashion in which you throw away a philosophical genius (the *only* one that Leftist philosophy has, and from whom you borrow your own categories when you set out to criticize a phenomenon), seems to me to be not only too *bold* an undertaking, but also one that is philosophically untenable. You justifiably refer to the collapse of Marxian social theory: but can there be a greater refutation of it than the attempt to realize it? Because, mind you, I should never deny that—with the exception of comrade Genghis Khan—everyone who attempted to realize Marx has a certain right to refer to him. You justifiably refer, in a negative way, to his whole fatal framework of organizational theory, etc. But is Hegel's argument against Kant that permanent peace is impossible a *philosophical* one? Or is this impossibility a reason to throw out *The Critique of Pure Reason*?

I don't deny that—after so many necessary "changes" and "restructurations," etc.—we are finally confronted with the question: to what extent is Theseus' ship really *Theseus*? But it is this question that we should avoid, not for any religious

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reasons, but because it is ultimately sterile. Until we can navigate with Marx's *radical philosophy* (and you navigate with it just as much as we do), we must concentrate on new problems, new interconnections (as you try to do in this draft); as Napoleon put it, before every battle: "*on s'engage et puis on voie.*"

Let us avoid misunderstandings: I am not only in agreement with the principle of "open doors" for all radical movements, but I also think that you are justified in every concrete objection. But, apart from the fact that Marx's philosophical displacement by Weber, Tönnies, Simmel, etc., seems to me simply ridiculous—to put it bluntly—not only because of the incomparable differences in the order of greatness but also because of theoretical principles as well, I think that we have to confront the new problems without worrying about what the Holy Gospel says about them. Then, retrospectively, we shall see what is left of the Holy Gospel. Not the other way around.

Excuse me for my aggressive tone (though you are the last person to whom one should apologize on this account, taking into consideration the hardly digestible tone of your review of Anderson and Timpanaro, even though I agree with you entirely on matters of content). But these questions are extremely important ones for me.

Warmest greetings,

Ferenc Feher

Cambridge, Massachusetts
February 2, 1977

Dear *Telos* people,

Today I received reflections on Paul P.'s report on the recent conference by Bob D'Amico and Bart Grahl, neither of whom attended the conference. I assume, perhaps wrongly, that others of you have seen these reflections now. In response to D'Amico's cover note, I set out to write him a letter, which is this present letter, though I'm also aiming it toward the larger group of us. I had also talked some with Russ Berman, who verbally voiced many of the criticisms and reservations raised by Bob and Bart. Part of the aim of the following comments, then, is to offer at least one more overview of what went on, since this may be helpful to those who weren't there; but it is also to comment some on the issues at hand.

First, Piccone rightly introduced his report with the reminder that we had long ago quashed his "collective" reports since they invariably pissed off some segment of the group. Now, while this most recent report indicates that Paul has not lost a jot of his touch (at pissing people off), it does surpass comments on persons and deals with meaty, substantive problems. On the other hand, as one who was present at at least half of the activities (I missed Paul's and Jim Schmidt's presentations), I will say that if Paul's report implies consensus around the views he expresses on the obsolescence of Marxism, his report is simply misleading. Several people present agreed by and large with his perspective; numerous others did not. So, for example, one glaring gap in Paul's report is the fact that, for an entire afternoon, evening, and part of a morning, Pat Murray offered a response, to simplify for a moment, on behalf of what he believed to be a creative Marxism. Pat's arguments generally moved along the lines suggested by both Bob and Grahl in their written comments.

Now, given that the thrust of the gathering moved around the issue of rejection-preservation of Marxism, one important aspect of the gathering is that people such as Bob, Bart, and Jacoby (some of our *durs* who are not so quick to junk

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the old ideas) were absent. I am not sure that their presence would have made for a necessarily better discussion, but it would have made for a different one, certainly one in which the critique of Marxism would not have proceeded as relatively smoothly as it did. In this regard, and to mention a couple other names, it is notable that Carl Boggs, who I was told was quite critical of Paul's position, said very little. Neither did I. My own reasons amount to this: in one discussion, Wodek Szemberg remarked that in all the pro- and anti-Marxism discussion he's been in, he's never seen one side convince the other; my own experience, repeated at the gathering, is that I am each time convinced by both sides. I also do not know, for example, whether the labor theory of value was or is still adequate because, to tell the truth, I've never understood it and don't feel competent to debate it. On the other hand, in the recent years I continually ask myself if I'm a Marxist and I generally answer myself, no. My reasons seem to have little *directly* to do with the issues raised by Paul on one side and Bob, Bart, Pat Murray & others on the other, tho the indirect links will be apparent (or not). First, Marxism as a diversified tradition has fought too long and with too much success against its own ethical (or in Bloch's terms, theological) bases, most often in the name of science but also in the name of *Praxis*. No doubt, Marxism teaches expertly the extent and sources of crimes committed in the name of one or another doctrine of "love thy neighbor," but I am tired and discontent with its repression of the concept of love & community that lay at its own core. Second, in this century, too many crimes have been committed in Marxism's name. Bob and Bart are surely right, and on this point they re-state what *Telos* and other currents have been all about: there is a Marxian critique of Stalinism. They are (particularly D'Amico) right, too, that the whole matter is not so simple as Marx himself being responsible for Stalinism and post-Stalinism. But, to make a longer story very short, the lines between the good Marxism and the bad have gotten quite blurred in my mind, and I generally find it useful and even exhilarating to proclaim my "break" with Marxism as a whole. Third, while I again agree with Bob about how continuously suggestive, brilliant, and vital so much of Marx and Marxism is, I am exhausted by the monopolistic dynamic that seems built into it (and may be built into any coherent theory) and simply (!) would rather follow Korsch in breaking with that dynamic, opting instead for a less coherent, differentiated embrace of a bunch of radical and bourgeois-radical currents of critique. (On this last point, this resembles what I understand was Jim Schmidt's comments, or part of them.)

Well, I didn't voice any of this at least in part because following the others was interesting enough. And this gets me to a hopefully important general comment: my strong sense of what went on was that there was *no* thought about *Telos* coming to a *consensus* on the question of Marxism. More, while Paul, for example, has a firm and developed view of this massive issue, he is aware (in spite of part of the drift of his report) that many of us don't agree with him, and presumably this is a central feature of *Telos*. Interesting in this connection is the fact that several people commented that, well, if readers haven't noticed that *Telos* long ago broke with Marxism, they're blind; while some others remarked that, well, after all the talk about breaking with Marxism, it's pretty obvious to anyone that the journal is still working within Marxism's frame. Again, I agree with both these views. To pursue the general point a moment: at our last morning's session, I think there was some sort of consensus around the idea that this gathering was no more than a first step in the direction of hopefully more periodic such gatherings which could go more closely into the issues so far raised. It was not the first *Telos* meeting, obviously, but a start of some on-going internal discussions. It was

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suggested, for example, that we try to have even partial meetings, i.e., if there is a conference (ASA, APSA, AHA or whatever) in, say, Washington, the east coast and some mid-west people would try to get together around it, producing some sort of notes for circulation. So in a given year there might be several meetings, tho not everyone would be at every one. I mention this a) for general edification; b) because I typically want to defuse any confrontation around Paul's report since no one should think that the report represents anything like "*Telos*" thinking, tho it is part of it; but, c) Bob's and Bart's replies *do* entail the sort of contributions that could and should be made to coming gatherings. (In fact, I think Bob's criticisms of Paul's position, as spelled out in the report, are trenchant & telling.)

A couple of group-dynamic type comments...I'm not at all sure how to deal, personally or collectively with what seems to me the fact that the substance of what one says in these meetings has alot to do with how one feels, particularly about the mode of someone else's presentation. That is, I got to the conference late, but generally prepared to chip in to the break-with-Marxism current. As the meeting proceeded, I became more protective of a Marxism I don't feel much like protecting (and which might not need me) because the critique seemed so shrill. On the other hand, when left to myself, I admit I spend alot of time crapping on Marxism, the Left and the whole business because it seems so stupid, reactionary, closed. I realize I'm raising several things at once here but the main thing is not being sure what to do when, for example, I agree with what Paul or Wodek says but not with "the way" they say it. On the one hand, I guess the thing to do is say so; on the other, this often strikes me as a diversion. Somewhat related to this not so coherent issue is another: some of us have thought thru alot of the issues and are accustomed to debating them; others have not and are not, but are just as interested. It is probably not inevitable that the latter—and they include people who have thought thru a lot but are not experienced—bless them—in the big, heavy-gunned polemics—get squelched. What I mean is that some of us did a lot of rapping; others little or none. This suits many, sure, but I think not all. There are three solutions: we talkers should be aware that those who ain't talkin' is thinkin'; them that's thinkin' should start talkin'; and it might not hurt to opt for the old saw of once in a while breaking down into smaller groups and easier settings thereby.

A couple of things on the minor matter of the unity of theory and practice. I find Paul's neo-Adornoesque defense of theoretical activity a breath of fresh air, but D'Amico's riposte is also bracing (can you imagine what it is like always to think everyone is right?). Anyway, I think that both positions are consistently represented in the journal as a whole. By that I mean, we never print or seek material on the basis of whether it is "relevant" to movement (?) work, yet what appears quite often is, quite often in ways we can't estimate. For better or worse, Paul's theoreticism is simply powerless to remove *Telos* from the moribundly percolating movement. The question of how the journal might possibly build closer ties to this or that or several pockets of active movement can't be answered by trying to formulate or trying to get a consensus around some proclamation that we *should* build such links. If this is going to happen—if *Telos* is to get more political, or political in different ways from the way it presently is—then the only first step I can see is someone writing or soliciting written material which gives good, positive direction to this otherwise abstract idea. On the related issue of engaging in polemic with sections of the Left: if I understand Bob correctly, I disagree; we have not been avoiding this like the plague. Much of what appears in the journal arouses the bile of nine-tenths of the U.S. organized Left. At the same time, there is *plenty* of room in the journal for more direct, creative polemic, not

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least with the various resurgent orthodoxies, and if I had more time and energy I'd be producing some. Anyone definitely should, even short and sweet stuff for the Notes sections, for example.

Paul Breines

St. Louis
March 24, 1977

Dear Bob, Bart, and the silent majority of editors who have not yet become enmeshed in the infamous "Marxism on Trial" debate:

I failed to answer the letters of criticisms concerning the Conference report since they came at a time when not only was *Telos* 30 in the process of critical gestation, but when I was personally embroiled in writing several other polemical pieces with far more idiotic issues in mind (the question of left-communism as described in *Insurgent Sociologist*, or Bordighism in William's new book). At any rate, in accordance with the new policy of not letting *anything* go unanswered, let me briefly try to deal with some of the substantive points raised in Bob's and Bart's letters.

Bob's charges deal with three issues: the "obsolescence" of Marxism; the theory-praxis question; and the problem of European communism.

As for the "obsolescence" of Marxism, I was not calling for collective social amnesia, but for a more critical attitude toward the old man himself without pulling the stale stunt of salvaging the "clean" Marx from the Stalinist rubble. The point is that unlike Bob, anymore not only do I not find Marx stimulating and important, but as I read about the *real* history of the 19th century (and not just what Marxist historiography has filtered down to us), I find Marx to be a monumental fraud. What is stimulating in him is the Hegelian dialectic that he recycles while hiding and confusing the issues. *From the very beginning* the authoritarian and totalitarian elements have been an inextricable feature of the theory itself. One need only read Castoriadis on the totalitarianism of the logic of representation, or Otto Rühle's biography of Marx which has been systematically ignored by Marxists, and his account of the debates and disputes within the First International. That Marx was personally a son-of-a-bitch is universally accepted; I was simply suggesting that maybe we should consider that his personality is accurately reflected in his theory. Far from advocating social amnesia, I have called for the discarding of the Marxian opium and for the examination of what happened in the 19th century independently of what Marx and Engels themselves tell us happened. What is really dynamite in Marx? The theory of reification and commodity fetishism? But that is Hegel, and Althusser is right in wanting to separate it from Marx. If we take the ridiculous objectivistic claims seriously, we must forget the idealist shell and keep the objectivistic kernel. But I say: the hell with the kernel—keep the shell. The Stalinists, the Althusserians, the Marxist-Leninists and other such fossils can have Marxist science. As for myself, I think the Hegelian shell will do just fine. What else is stimulating? The philosophy of history? But that bit the dust with Marx's account of the Asiatic mode of production. The economics of *Capital*? But that is the attempt to reconstruct the logic of entrepreneurial capitalism and, although in some of his more lucid moments Marx himself points out the possibility of late capitalist developments in the *Grundrisse*, that still leaves us with an a-political economistic account whose narcotic function is to reassure us that, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, the infamous law of the falling rate of profit will

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eventually vindicate all of us, who in the meantime can go on parading under a Marxist banner without bothering to figure out what is really happening.

Furthermore, the sacrosanct law of the falling rate of profit is nothing but a lot of horseshit—not only in the way that Marx himself formulated it (on the metaphysical assumption that only living labor produces value—while the whole queston of value must be analyzed in terms of collective objectifications involving both living and dead labor, and independently of the ridiculous competitive model that is presupposed by the Marxian account), but also in terms of Grossmann's, Mattick's, and even Rosdolsky's reconstructions that point to the decreasing profitability of capital either as a result of under-consumption and overproduction, or even in terms of the impossibility of further growth given the ecological limits. I am prepared to argue that ultimately, independently of the political posing of the question (which neither automatically results from the economic contradictions nor can be voluntaristically precipitated by a Leninist strategy), capitalism has no trouble whatsoever dealing with the falling rate of profit: the question ultimately reduces to the possibility of a smooth rate of economic growth, both extensively as well as intensively. But I do not see this as being irremediably hindered by anything other than a major cultural challenge concerning the human costs of the capitalist management of this rate of growth. Posed in these terms, the question leads to quite different directions than those followed by Marxists of all shades—with the possible exception of Gramsci.

What else is all that stimulating in Marx? The logic of representation? The constantly creeping objectivism? The metaphysical theory of objective reason according to which the logic of capital represents the logic of essence as contraposed to the everyday economic appearances? Let's be serious. All of this mythology must go, and once it goes I see absolutely nothing left that requires the retention of Marx other than some lingering leftist nostalgia. If Bob wants to continue this debate, I suggest that he defend what he considers crucial in Marx in some way other than by employing what used to be called the Yugoslav argument (this has to do with the way that the Yugoslav apologists tended to justify the utterly disastrous state of their society to visitors when it was pointed out to them that maybe something was fishy: the answer invariably was, "if you think this is bad, you should see Egypt or Greece, or some other terribly backward and repressive country"). I think there are much better alternatives that have been forcibly repressed by the Marxist tradition: the anarchist tradition seems immensely more honest and human, notwithstanding its naivete; and the Hegelian tradition seems immensely more sophisticated than the camouflaged Hegelianism of Marx. To conclude, Bob's charge is purely "formal" and does not even begin to deal with the substantive issues.

The theory-praxis question also needs to be discussed on more substantial terrain. Bob claims that *Telos* in its youth was uncompromisingly radical in its view of Marxist politics and theory. But as I recall, we were merely naive—and dogmatically so, in theory, while we have never had any kind of consistent politics which could be labelled Marxist or otherwise. At best, we parroted Marx in theory and developed completely unrelated political positions which were grounded solely on the immediacy of the situation. When were our politics ever rooted in a Marxist analysis? The closest that we ever came to such a thing, as I recall from my experiences in Buffalo, was when a fellow student, Mike Hamilton—a "serious" Marxist—at the height of the student demonstrations, wanted us to join him and other students in a march through the working-class neighborhoods to band together in struggle with the proletariat—which would have resulted in a show of proletarian solidarity compared to which My-Lai

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would have looked like a picnic! In fact, the New Left became historically irrelevant precisely when PL sought to inject into it a "Marxist" politics. In practice, the Marxist narcotic serves as an excuse for not having any politics. The assumption that we really know what we want after the revolution, that we are in possession of the logic that will explain how we are getting there, and that the promised reconciliation is written in the very mechanisms of capitalism is theoretical LSD. I would like to know what, at this time, constitutes a Marxist politics: Fighting against nuclear power? Teaching a radical interpretation of Plato or of the German Reformation? Forming a party? Joining the working class in its daily deadly struggles against the mortal enemy capitalism? Again, let's be serious and drop this pretense which provides us with a moral pedestal from which we can throw condemning thunderbolts at everyone and everything around us. If anything, Marxism prevents us from having a meaningful politics in a sectarian conceit that we really have privileged access to being.

As for Eurocommunism, all that I suggested was that it may be the only hope for the kind of cultural offensive which can meaningfully challenge capitalist hegemony where it is weakest. That's all. The re-examination of problems of bureaucracy, participation, organization, etc., that this would require seems to me wholly sobering when seen in terms of the sterile debates that have so far taken most of our time—and still do, and maybe still will for a hell of a long time to come...

The last puzzling aspect in D'Amico's letter is his use of "ideological." What is it contraposed to? "Scientific?" or maybe "philosophical?" Either in the sense of an apologetic for hidden class interests, or in the sense of "onesided," or even in the sense of purely superstructural, ideology simply either does not make any sense at all or it is totally irrelevant. If we once and for all get rid of the assumption that we have some direct pipeline to reality through science, revelation or metaphysics, then everything is ideological and the word itself, having no polar otherness, loses its meaning. Now, since we neither have the pipeline nor can even begin to pretend that our mediations are actually effective in some political dimension—thus aspiring to Gramsci's notion of what is not ideological—the usage that Bob makes of ideological seems to me wholly honorific or completely off the wall. I agree with his call "Down with eclecticism" but I would also add: "Down with pseudo-arguments" and "Down with slogans altogether."

Bart's argument follows roughly the lines of Bob's, but differs somewhat. He claims that all of the things that I listed as shortcomings of Marxist theory are attributable to Lenin and the Marxists, but not really to Marx. Actually, the falling rate of profit is vintage Third Volume *Capital*, objectivism runs rampant in many places, and the logic of representation is fundamental. Sorry, but this is Marx and not just the Marxists. Furthermore, the restriction of the analysis to entrepreneurial capitalism (with hints concerning its overcoming) is found throughout Marx and could not be otherwise: the competitive and entrepreneurial model was *his* model. But what is most puzzling in Bart's efforts to salvage the "real" Marx from the "Marxist" contaminations is that the real Marx becomes a kind of myth, above and beyond any kind of possible identification. It is reminiscent of another Eastern European joke about the nature of socalism: all the appearances of socialism are hopelessly gummed up, but the essence itself remains fundamentally sound. What is "really" Marx's theory? And what kind of utterly undialectical perspective would sharply separate the phenomena (Marxisms) from the essence (Marx)? Bart talks about the distinction between revolutionary and conciliatory currents in Marxist theory. What revolutionary currents? Even the *Links-kommunismus* of the Dutch KPD(A) which, at best, culminated in the works of Mattick, presupposed the theory of the crash. People such as Korsch who rejected such a theory

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were forced to give up Marxism, while Rühle, Pannekoek, Gorter and others could never transcend their visions of a council communism which was not only extremely problematic, but also tied to a kind of class composition already obsolete before WW I. Is the Chinese brand of Marxism revolutionary, with its systematic cretinization of the masses and the creation of a repressive apparatus that makes Stalinism look like a minor annoyance? What is this revolutionary Marxism? I am prepared to defend the claim that in whatever case one puts forth as "revolutionary" Marxism, the "revolutionary" part is foreign to the Marxist framework—nor is this something invented by me alone.

Also problematic here is Bart's assumption that either one is a Marxist or one regresses to a pre-Marxist position. What presumption! Marxism as the end of history. Nothing has been accomplished in the last century in social theory since Marx: Adorno, Marcuse, Kosik, Merleau-Ponty, Castoriadis, etc., are either irrelevant epigones or pre-Marxists. This is absurd. Weber, Simmel, Husserl and a host of others have dealt with problems of bureaucracy, constitution, reification, circulation, etc., in much more fruitful and sophisticated ways than Marx ever did. The Frankfurt School's reflections on problems of history, reconciliation, redemption, the origins of the spirit of capitalism, the possibility of social theory, etc., constitute major advances beyond Marxism. One could go on: stopping the history of social theory (or even of the only sound one) with Marx seems to me indicative of a profound theoretical ignorance —not to mention social amnesia (which presupposes at least a prior acquaintance with the subject matter).

We may not have dealt directly with sectarian groups individually, but to claim that we have not been struggling with the Marxist heritage within ourselves—and consequently with the whole tradition—seems to me simply wrong. If that is not what we have been doing, then I have no idea what I have done for the past ten years of my intellectual life. Of course, the critiques are precisely the result of these long struggles and are *aufgehoben* in the sense of being obsolete as well as in the sense of being sedimented as an inextricable part of our consciousness—in the same way that the past is always part of our very being. That's all that I meant in the discussion of the obsolescence of Marxism.

Like Bob, Bart also attacks my critique of the nexus between theory and praxis without in the least indicating what the hell this connection could be. Of course, it is not immediate relevance, although this may be the way it is understood by some of the less sophisticated groups. But even if we understand it as the logic of the essence which collectively mediates the development of the totality by being appropriated by the *active* part of that social totality, it still remains off the wall. It is simply a pipedream to assume that some active part (not necessarily the industrial proletariat) is presently in the process of appropriating Marxist theory in order to bring about collective subjectivity. If anything, the more instrumentalizable parts of Marxist theory are being appropriated by the bourgeois theorists and the Kremlin precisely in order to prevent the qualitative changes necessary to achieve social individuality. In this context, the classical way of posing the problem of the unity of theory and praxis—which in Marx obtains only in the identity of wage-labor and the proletariat (the only point of contact between Marxist theory and politics)—becomes nonsense and all the constant talk about this is similarly a symptom of acute theoretical underdevelopment. Thus, in a context of systematic instrumentalization, of radical theory in the absence of any kind of revolutionary agency, theory must escalate its density and opacity precisely to avoid immediate instrumentalization. It is no accident that the Frankfurt School became composed eventually of mandarins able to talk only with each other.

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Now, the thrust of my argument concerning the contradictory predicament of radical theory is that, since capitalism integrates radical theory as internal mechanisms of further development, and in order to have a genuinely functional internal mechanism, capitalism must allow theory to retain its spontaneity and negativity, what this means is that there may still be some progressive function left in capitalism. Marx himself claims that no system ever disappears unless it has exhausted all possibility of further development. If such is the case, then radical theory should confront self-consciously this predicament rather than shove it under the rug in the name of revolutionary Marxism. This is why my discussion moves on to the new set of contradictions posed on the world level by Eurocommunism. Far from this being "just the most self-serving cop-out imaginable," it seems to me that the "revolutionary Marxist" position is the cop-out—although maybe not the "most imaginable" one.

Now, point IV in Bart's letter is completely correct, with the only difference that, in the last line, we do *not* land "neatly back in the swamp of 'the immediate political relevance of theoretical discourse'." What we land in is the *mediated* political relevance of such discourse. My whole point was precisely to outline the process whereby this mediation takes place. Far from being a detail, this *is* the point. Have a little imagination!

Point V draws some of the consequences, but it is not that theory gets bogged down in capitalism and comes to contradict its own goal, but that theory comes to realize itself on a new level where the contradiction is not resolved but reconstituted in such a way that it allows for some progressive articulation. What becomes problematic is the goal that capitalism seems to be preventing. What was that? Socialism? Maybe we should think on that for a while. What is it? The collective ownership of the means of production? Is it the remedy for the ill effects brought about by the anarchic mode of production, which is to be found in the rationalization of the whole thing? But that already took place forty years ago! Is it a new type of humanity? Ha, but if that is the case, then the old ways of trying to attain that turn out to be utterly useless. A new humanity for us has nothing to do with Lenin's Taylorized cheerful robots, nor with the abstract rationality of the heroes of science fiction novels. In a situation where the possibilities for further capitalist accumulation are not exhausted given the international re-establishment of American hegemony, then the millenium is not around the corner (and I don't mean this in a derogatory way), but is still in the process of gestation. What do we do then? Wait around for the day of emancipation by watching TV re-runs? We must never lose sight of the goal—without, however, fetishizing it into a fixed form whose inescapable obsolescence renders us into so many victims of the cunning of reason. We cannot simply hold on to some mythical "pure Marxism" which may be psychologically reassuring but which has no historical import.

Marxism is not the *only* theory of capitalism that we have, and if anything, it prevents us from coming up with a new one. The closing paragraph of Bart's letter is a low blow: the charge of opportunism is ridiculous. His point is that we, or at least I, have joined the system and that as a result, "real negation would *have to be distorted.*" So we (I) have sold out, while real negation remains. What is this negation that is being distorted? What is this opportunism? Presumably, while the theorists who have joined the system distort real negation, the real revolutionaries are still carrying forth the struggle for human emancipation. But where? How? When?

Enough for now.

Paul Piccone

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# REVIEWS:

Phil Slater, *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School: A Marxist Perspective*. London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977.

The proletariat of the 1970s will be stunned by the news that the Frankfurt School was short on practice. Yet if the immediate impact of this report is shock, the long range can only be sobering and salutary: the less illusions the better. For this discovery we are indebted to Phil Slater. Slater joins a number of other stalwart academics who are risking their careers to spread the word that the Frankfurt School were also academics. Through an intense and revolutionary sifting of the documents Professor Slater has concluded that Professor Horkheimer was a professor.

This book is bad, a real lemon. Slater has nothing to say and says it poorly. The book contains neither new facts, new thoughts, nor an accurate presentation of familiar ones. A volume in the "International Library of Sociology" founded by Karl Mannheim, it marks the nadir of that series. Thrown-together, it is best thrown away. Slater toots the single note on his fife without cease: the failure of the Frankfurt School to enlist in the practical and proletarian struggle. By page five we have gotten the message; by page ten the note is grating; by page twenty-five we are gasping.

Slater generously and often concedes that the Frankfurt School made at least a contribution of "a large number of highly pertinent observations." Then the indictment is lowered: they failed to "relate concretely to the praxis and theory of the class struggles in Germany" (63); and the corollary: their critique was "largely superstructural" (47). No empty assertion, Slater's "Marxist perspective" enables him to draw a large number of not-so-highly pertinent observations. With no nonsense, and little sense, Slater outlines the groups and individuals who were active in the class struggle. His purpose in this outline is to demonstrate conclusively that attractive and practical options existed, but the Frankfurt School chose to avoid them. The force of his argument is somewhat weakened by the grudging and regular admission that each of the possibilities suffered from some basic, if not lethal, flaw. For example, Slater has also discovered that the German Communist Party was Stalinist; but this is incidental.

Bracketing the main argument, it might be supposed that Slater has something to add to existing accounts of the "origin and significance of the Frankfurt School." This would be a parochial hope. Slater extracts a fact or two from an interview with Felix Weil, which he accepts without question, about the inception of the Frankfurt School; that does it. Moreover Slater is some five years behind the secondary literature; this mars an appraisal of the significance of the Frankfurt School. While such distance from the literature might testify to an independence of spirit and orientation, it is in no way compensated by an original and serious reading of the primary materials. Slater is distant from these, too.

In a work that touts itself as Marxist, one might also expect some evaluation of other Marxist writings on the Frankfurt School. After all there have been some. Slater makes a weak gesture in this direction. Out of a fairly substantial literature, Slater only handles, or rather mangles, Albrecht Wellmer. He cites Hans-Jürgen Krahl and Alfred Schmidt several times. The book begins with a pot-shot at Martin Jay's *The Dialectical Imagination* for ignoring the "theory-praxis nexus" and lacking a "scientifically defined notion of 'propaganda,' " —whatever that is—and he calls upon one kindred soul who has also denounced the Frankfurt School as intellectual snobs.[1]

1. The kindred soul is Douglas Kellner in his review of Martin Jay's *The Dialectical Imagination* in *New German Critique*, 4 (Winter 1975). ". . . Horkheimer and Adorno developed

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That sums it up. Recent Marxist works on the relationship of critical theory to Korsch and Lukács, political economy, fascism, sociology of knowledge, psychoanalysis, positivism, and so on, are passed by in silence—and take their revenge. The book is not a contribution to an on-going discussion, but a documentation of the falling rate of intelligence. All that Slater manages to illuminate is his own insular intellectual world: this he does with genius and finesse. Again a confrontation with other Marxists, or even a comprehensive bibliography, would hardly be necessary if the book's merits lay elsewhere.

Slater wastes no time in demonstrating his fealty to texts and contexts. Carl Grünberg, the first director of the Institute, is denounced for—guess what?—failing to promote the "Marxian notion of scientific socialism as a class weapon of the proletariat" (4). Not bad enough, his work consisted of "collecting, sorting, checking and presenting documents... Grünberg never featured a theoretical work from his own pen" (7). Not true; Grünberg contributed extensive essays to a left encyclopedia, *Wörterbuch der Volkswirtschaft*. There has even been a recent edition of his entries.[2] These same pages discuss "the work" of Karl Wittfogel as a precursor to the Frankfurt School. Out of Wittfogel's many publications, a single one is mentioned. Ignored is Lukács' critique of Wittfogel, which in this context is relevant.[3]

The sloppy and uninformed approach persists. It can be stated with assurance that nothing in this book is comprehensive or authoratative, and little is accurate. The next section takes up Franz Borkenau's *Der Uebergang vom feudalen zum bürgerlichen Weltbild*. The lengthy reply by Grossmann is unnoticed.[4] Adorno's early philosophical works, collected since 1973, might shed some light on the "origin" of the Frankfurt School; they are not mentioned.[5] Max Adler is presented as the practical fulfillment of critical theory whom the Frankfurt School refused to confront. Slater refuses to confront Marcuse's critique of Adler in "Transzendentaler Marxismus?"[6] or Adler's response.[7]

So it goes from important omissions and errors that enfeeble the argument to less important ones that suggest Slater's mind was on other matters. He likes to be emphatic about trifles because he rightly suspects he has nothing to say about substance. Luxemburg is identified as having "founded the [German Communist]

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an increasingly rarified elitist style. Their audience was clearly a small group of intellectuals that had the culture to follow *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*...Surely, there is little excuse for Marxist intellectuals to write in such an involuted, in-group manner..." Surely. One of the oddities of this popular review is that its rebuttal of Jay is exactly Jay's argument: the retreat of the Frankfurt School from Marxism. Oh well. See my review "Marxism and the Critical School," *Theory and Society*, 1 (1974), pp. 231ff, and Martin Jay, Russell Jacoby "Marxism and Critical Theory" *Theory and Society*, 2 (1975), p. 257ff.

2. Henryk Grossmann, Carl Grünberg, *Anarchismus, Bolschewismus, Sozialismus. Aufsätze aus dem 'Wörterbuch der Volkswirtschaft,'* hrsg. C. Pozzoli (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1971).

3. G. Lukács, "Wittfogel: *The Science of Bourgeois Society*" (1925) in *Political Writings* (London: NLB, 1972), pp. 143ff. On Wittfogel see G.L. Ulmen, "Wittfogel's Science of Society" *Telos*, 24 (Summer, 1975).

4. H. Grossmann, "Die gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen der mechanistischen Philosophie und die Manufaktur," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, IV, 2 (1935), pp. 161ff.

5. T.W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften 1: Philosophische Früschriften* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973).

6. H. Marcuse, "Transzendentaler Marxismus?" *Die Gesellschaft*, VII (1930), p. 304ff.

7. See P. Heintel, *System und Ideologie. Der Austromarxismus im Spiegel der Philosophie Max Adlers* (Wein: Oldenbourg, 1967), p. 35ff.

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Party" when she was a reluctant participant.[8] Bernstein is called the "father of reformism." Siegfried Kracauer's 1929 *Die Angestellten* is called "indubitably the first serious study of the modern white-collar workers" when indubitably it is not. Kracauer himself refers to an earlier one.[9] "Indubitably" recurs in various forms throughout. Slater finds it difficult to write without using "clearly," "significantly," or "actually" when nothing is either clear, significant or actual.

To return to the main thesis: the Frankfurt School failed "to establish links to the working class movement in the 1930s, and, subsequently..." (xv). For the novice Slater gives advice on how to spot a real revolutionary. "A real revolutionary theory involves a theory of *organization* and *political action*. What is needed is a *practical-critical* theory. And precisely this is lacking in the Frankfurt School's conception" (28). Of course precisely this is lacking in Slater's book, which he half admits. With no embarrassment he tells us that his concern is a "metacritique," which he vaguely claims is "not 'purely' theoretical." Why it is not "purely" theoretical is difficult to fathom. He charges, for example, that the Frankfurt School "failed to evolve a *practical* critique of the USSR" (63). He gives us no clue as to the nature of a practical critique of the USSR.

The "thesis," stripped of its stupidities, suffers from the flaw that few, including the Frankfurt School, would controvert it. Even in Slater's muddled account it is evident that the Frankfurt School from its inception, by its members' own account, was distant from practical politics. Not one to lose a thesis by lack of opposition, Slater makes half a case that Horkheimer's 1937 "Traditional and Critical Theory," which he dubs "the Manifesto," was a "radical advance" towards concrete politics. He then argues that the Frankfurt School drew back from this advance post. That essay in fact is a justification for the isolation of intellectuals: "Today, when the whole weight of the existing state of affairs is pushing mankind towards...barbarism, the circle of solidarity is narrow enough...truth may reside with numerically small groups of men."[10] Apart from this, Horkheimer, then living in New York City, was hardly in a position to articulate a practical politics; nothing would be more metaphysical in that situation. These sorts of banal facts do not cloud the clarity of Slater's "metacritique."

Rather Slater is casual with the simplest of facts. Horkheimer's inaugural lecture at the Institute is in 1931; the first issue of the *Zeitschrift* is in 1932; and exile comes in 1933. One might imagine that a practical critique would pay some attention to these years; but who would want to indict the Frankfurt School on the basis of three slim years? Much better to work with some vague conception of the twenties and thirties in which the Frankfurt School was in full flight from praxis. So Slater finds all kinds of groups and individuals that were involved with the working class and which the Frankfurt School kept at arm's length: Luxemburg, the German Communist Party, Trotsky, Branklerites, Austrian Social Democrats, and so on. That these as viable options either predate the Frankfurt School or suffer from their own flaws becomes secondary.

Slater discusses these alternatives, supposing that each was the practical fulfillment of critical theory; this is to convincingly show that the Frankfurt School's political inactivity was a matter of sin and fear. Slater is not entirely witless, and he usually

8. See *Die Gründungsparteitag der KPD*, hrsg. H. Weber (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969).

9. Emil Lederer's *Die Privatangestellten in der modernen Wirtschaftsentwicklung* is from 1912. Kracauer himself cites Lederer and Marschaks' "Der neue Mittelstand" from 1926.

10. M. Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," *Critical Theory* (New York: Seabury, 1972), p. 241.

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confesses that by the early 1930s the options may not have been especially compelling. For example, it has not escaped Slater that Rosa Luxemburg was in fact dead. He is equally thorough when discussing some of the other oppositional groups.

After a quick once over, Trotsky gets a clean bill of health; here is the "*practical* exponent" of the Frankfurt School (68). But no, Slater belatedly discovers, Trotsky and the Frankfurt School differed on the role of the party. Moreover Trotskyism never "generated a significant political movement" in Germany, and so it was not "inexcusable" for the Frankfurt School to avoid him. But not so with the next group, the so-called "right" opposition or KPD-O (or KPO). The reasoning here is sterling. By some mysticism "one is justified in expecting to find in the KPO a concretised form of some of the Frankfurt School's principles" and presumably more proof of the fear and trembling of critical theory. But Slater stumbles upon Stalinism in the KPO; and so the lame conclusion: "Despite its serious concern to preserve the concrete dialectical unity of theory, party and class the KPO cannot be regarded as any real embodiment of the Frankfurt School's ideas. . ." (71). But at least—give 'em credit!—they affirmed a "strict Marxism-Leninism" unlike Horkheimer's "abstract hope."

In principle one could make the best case for council communism, that is, if one stays within the terms of Slater's "metacritique" and ignores dates, countries and the socio-economic situation. In Slater's elegant language: "One is not without some justification in asking whether Council Communism could perhaps be a concrete embodiment of many of the principles of the Frankfurt School" (73). His argument here is a neat summary of the entire book: illogic, sloppy scholarship and phony conclusions. His case rests with Pannekoek. Of Pannekoek's works, Slater appears to be familiar with exactly two: a lecture from 1919 and his 1938 *Lenin as Philosopher*. This latter work Slater considers the unity of theory and practice.

Now Slater gets down to business. By some arduous archival work Slater discovers a letter of Korsch's to Mattick "where Korsch said he intended to try to interest Horkheimer and the Institute in Pannekoek's book; either he, Korsch, would write a review for the *Zeitschrift*, or else, at the Director's request, he would leave this to Horkheimer himself. Surely," Slater continues, "Korsch was justified in expecting some response from the Frankfurt School." Yes, indeed, but what happens? Here the facts or archives fail Slater. "Yet, no such review appeared, by Korsch or anybody else, in the *Zeitschrift*. And this failure reveals *more than anything else*, the break in the theory-praxis nexus: Horkheimer's team steered clear of any debate which had direct political implications" (74, italics added). This is a honey. Slater does not even know why a review did not appear; yet this failure is the most emphatic expression of the break in the "theory-praxis nexus." Perhaps Korsch failed to write one. At least two reviews by Korsch appeared in the *Zeitschrift* during this period.[11] To be sure, it is possible that Horkheimer did reject a review. Korsch bemoaned that Horkheimer was editing the political life out of his contributions. Perhaps Horkheimer cut it. But Slater tells us nothing about this particular review nor, obviously what it contained. Nor would a single review seem to matter one way or the other. Furthermore Korsch hardly considered the Pannekoek book the quintessence of theory and practice. He complained to Mattick that Pannekoek had written the book under a pseydonym. This was "new proof," he wrote, that Pannekoek was discarding what little influence he might have because of "his naive belief in the possibility of an unprejudiced factual discussion."[12]

11. Two of Korsch's reviews can be found in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschuung*, VII (1938), p. 469ff. and its sucessor *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, IX (1941), p. 358ff.

12. K. Korsch, "Briefe," in *Marxistische Revolutionstheorie. Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung 2*, hrsg. C. Pozzoli (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1974), p. 200.

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Other chapters of the book steamroll through psychology and aesthetics. Slater drags out the Marxist-Leninist Guide to Critical Theory and finds that the Frankfurt School's interpretation of Freud lacked "not only all relation to concrete praxis, but, in addition, all notion of ideological struggle. . ." (112). This is due to the absence of "an economically founded class analysis." Reich is billed as the perfect unity of theory and practice. If Slater was only dimly aware of Luxemburg's death, he does not seem to have any notion of Reich's life: no mention is made of Reich's thoughts after 1934. One might not suppose that Reich's theories, at least after 1934, were deficient or that his own links to the working class left something to be desired.

Slater's instant Marxist perspective serves once more in the discussion of aesthetics. The Frankfurt School is accused of lacking a concept of "art as 'struggle'." Adorno is indicted for an "elitist and pessimistic" aesthetics and Marcuse for renouncing all "communication to a revolutionary class." The antidote to this "practical sterility" is the down-to-earth aesthetics of Brecht and Benjamin; each had a direct line to the working class. Needless to say, the discussion here is as tight and informed as elsewhere.

For positive and upbeat thinkers a single virtue of the book may be noted: there is a complete unity of form and content. Slater's relation to English, like his relation to thought, is strictly accidental. The book is not so much badly written, as not written; it is assembled out of jottings on 3 by 5 cards. Moreover Slater has an unerring knack for the awkward phrase and word. He likes to call the Frankfurt School Horkheimer's "team." He uses the antiquated "sublate" for the Hegelian negation, and he regularly trots out "problematise." He tells us that the Hegelian legacy was "fully rationalised by Marx" or that the German Communist Party was "the issue of the Spartacists." What remains are the overworked "clearlys" and "actuallys" sweating to carry the book to the finish; here Slater has wisely ommited a conclusion.

*Russell Jacoby*

Pedro Cavalcanti and Paul Piccone, eds., *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci.* Translated by Pierluigi Molajoni, Mary Ann Aiello-Peabody, Paul Piccone, and Jon Thiem. St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975.

Paolo Spriano, *The Occupation of the Factories: Italy 1920.* Translated with Introduction by Gwyn A. Williams. London: Pluto Press, 1975.

Gwyn A. Williams, *Proletarian Order: Antonio Gramsci, Factory Councils and the Origins of Communism in Italy, 1911-1921.* London: Pluto Press, 1975.

The *Biennio Rosso* of post-World War I Italy—that "Red Two Years" of popular upsurge which began with radical dreams and collapsed in exhausted despair—stands as a great political landmark. Part of the great wave of popular and working-class upheavals that swept across Europe in the aftermath of the war and the Bolshevik Revolution, a movement constituting the first political threat to capitalism in Italy, it contained all the elements of a rapidly-unfolding, tense, at times amusing, and ultimately tragic, historical drama. There was the unremitting cycle of political and economic warfare, from lockouts and mass strikes to demonstrations, public

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assemblies, and street clashes that culminated in the Turin General Strike of April 1920 and the "Occupation of the Factories" in September of the same year. There was the spectre of a fragile bourgeois order on the verge of collapse, retreating in the face of a proletarian assault that seemed to be inventing new forms of struggle by the day, as if another civilization were about to appear at any moment. There were the angry and violent encounters within the radical opposition itself over every conceivable strategic question: spontaneism vs. vanguardism, factory councils vs. unions, popular self-management vs. structural reforms, abstentionism vs. electoralism—aside from debates concerning the timeliness of armed insurrection, relations with the Comintern and the Bolsheviks, etc. There was the final, climactic moment of political crisis when the alternative "socialism or barbarism" inescapably presented itself but could not be turned to the advantage of the left—a moment characterized by Amadeo Bordiga as the "revolution that failed." And there were, of course, the actors in the drama: the skillfully manipulative liberal Premier, Antonio Giolitti; the legendary Socialist leader G.M. Serrati; the industrialist Giacomo Olivetti; the anarchist Errico Malatesta; the Turin communists Angelo Tasca and Palmiro Togliatti; the ultra-Leninist Bordiga; the omnipresent Comintern leadership; the behind-the-scenes figures of Georges Sorel; and the young Sardinian hunchback, Antonio Gramsci, who plunged head-first into the battle only to emerge beaten, isolated and depressed at a time when fascism made its first ominous stirrings—the same Gramsci who later complained that "history teaches, but it has no pupils."

It seemed hardly possible that in the space of only a few years such an explosion could so easily give way to fascist reaction, that an organized proletarian movement capable of immobilizing the entire country could submit so quickly and so completely to annihilating defeat by the Mussolini regime, to the extent that the left would remain a dormant political force in Italy for at least two decades. This defeat raises some fundamental questions about the historical situation that produced the *Biennio Rosso* and shaped its possibilities and limits. Could the *Biennio Rosso* in fact have led to a general revolutionary rupture, as is commonly assumed? If so, were the obstacles that led to failure internal to the left opposition itself (i.e., strategic and tactical) or external to it, the result of a successful campaign by the bourgeoisie to coopt or quell the insurgency? If not, then what was the character of the political situation that *did* erupt in postwar Italy, and what realistic leftist advances were possible given the balance of forces, the strategic options, and the level of ideological preparation achieved by the Italian proletariat (and other popular forces) at the time?

Williams' *Proletarian Order* and Spriano's *The Occupation of the Factories*, the first comprehensive historical accounts of this period for English-language readers, provide a basis for a critical discussion of these political questions.[1] The Cavalcanti-

1. Earlier books, such as John Cammett's excellent *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (Stanford, 1967) and W. Hilton-Young's *The Italian Left* (London, 1949) have explored different aspects of the *Biennio Rosso*, but only briefly or peripherally (often in connection with the rise of fascism). The Spriano volume appeared originally in Italy under the title *L'Occupazione delle fabbriche* (Turin, 1964). Williams' translation is first-rate. Although best-known for his remarkable history of the Italian Communist Party, published in five volumes by Editori Riuniti, Spriano has written extensively on the early Turin working class movement. His two previous volumes were: *Socialismo e classe operaia a Torino dal 1892 al 1913* (Turin, 1958) and *Torino operaia nelle grande guerra* (Turin, 1960). None of Spriano's other works has been translated. Among contemporary Italian scholars, Spriano is closest to being *the* "official" PCI historian; yet (and this reflects the PCI's unique respect for intellectual and cultural diversity) he is able to maintain a critical and independent stance without any intervention from the party hierarchy.

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Piccone compendium of Gramsci's essays written in the period 1915-19, now translated into English for the first time, conveys something of the overall direction and spirit of the "early" Gramsci as the *Biennio Rosso* upheavals were unfolding.

The *Biennio Rosso* has its roots in the prewar years, when the delicate ideological consensus that Giolitti manipulated through the traditional political art of *trasformismo*—the molding of broad elite alliances which served to absorb political opposition—began to disintegrate. Rapid economic growth after 1900, with the emergence of the great "industrial triangle" of Milan, Turin, and Genoa, brought Northern Italy firmly into the orbit of European industrial society. Within scarcely more than a decade, the region became a leading producer of autos, rubber, cement, textiles, chemicals, and appliances. The workers who came to the new factories were paid low wages even in comparison with what their counterparts received elsewhere, working conditions were often tortuous, and management exercised a harshly paternalistic form of domination. Industrial workers joined the Socialist Party (PSI) and the trade union movement in large numbers, though many were attracted to syndicalism and anarchism.

Like other parties affiliated with the Second International, the PSI proclaimed a revolutionary theory and strategy that masked an ardently reformist practice. Its politics shaped less by the "maximalist" leadership of G.M. Serrati than by the architect of parliamentary socialism in Italy, Filippo Turati, the PSI centered its struggle around liberal reforms in the political sphere (e.g., universal suffrage, which was finally granted in 1911) and limited reforms in the economic sphere—a successful strategy that resulted in large membership and electoral gains that by 1919 gave the party 156 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The PSI's trade union partner, the General Confederation of Labor (CGL), functioned mainly as a bargaining instrument with capitalist management; its premise (theoretically articulated best by Claudio Treves) was to strengthen working-class economic power with the goal of precipitating a general crisis that would hasten the "natural death" of capitalism. While revolutionary in commitment, the concrete organizational identity of both the PSI and CGL was forged, first, out of a frenzied hostility to all forms of "spontaneism" (anarchism, syndicalism), and secondly, out of its institutionalized position as a mediating structure between government, capital, and labor that was part of Giolitti's *trasformismo*.

Although conflict between the proletarian masses and an increasingly deradicalized and cautious PSI-CGL leadership had spilled into the open even before 1914, such a reformist scenario might have worked had it not been for the outbreak of the war and the Russian Revolution. The military debacle left Italy in a state of numbness: out of more than 6 million men conscripted for the war effort, 600,000 were killed and 700,000 suffered permanent disability. Defeat and disruption led to a severe economic decline, characterized by food shortages, unemployment, inflation, and a sharply falling lira—all linked to a drastic fall in industrial production and exacerbated by widespread painful social dislocation.[2] Popular militancy spread rapidly; already by 1917-1918 a series of strikes, street demonstrations, and land occupations had begun to erode the PSI-CGL reformist hegemony while the chaotic breakdown of labor

2. According to Spriano, production fell by 15 percent in mining, 40 percent in engineering, and 20 percent in chemicals. Moreover, "the whole productive apparatus was blocked; masses of immobile capital were frozen in investments which the ending of the war made unprofitable. Naturally, strikes too ran parallel to the shrinkage in production: in 1920, there were 1,881, with 1,267,953 strikers and 16,398,227 lost working days, the highest figure ever recorded." *The Occupation of the Factories*, p. 43.

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discipline meant that, in Williams' words, "A mass of workers well to the left of the PSI had suddenly emerged on the streets."[3] Syndicalism appealed to many workers, reflected in a membership growth of the Italian Syndicalist Union from 100,000 to 300,000 during the war (by 1920 membership rose to 900,000). Dramatic news of the October Revolution fed this unrest and gave new encouragement to popular struggles in Piedmont, notably Turin, where remarkable industrial development after the turn of the century (spurred by auto manufacturing) gave rise to a skilled, concentrated, and relatively homogeneous working class that prompted comparisons with Petrograd on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution. Out of Turin's general population of little more than half a million in 1917, 150,000 were factory workers—the vast majority of whom were bound together by an intimate communications network and by a common militancy. It was in Turin too that the entrenched reformists within the PSI and CGL came under the most virulent and sustained challenge by a proletarian movement that was determined to create its own popular structures, notably the *consigli di fabbrica*, or factory councils, which became the essence of Turin council communism during the *Biennio Rosso* period. Not surprisingly, Turin emerged as the seedbed of new theoretical and strategic perspectives that subjected the positivist and economistic Marxism of the PSI to devastating attacks from which it would never recover.

Gramsci, who came to Marxism and radical politics in Turin, emerged as one of the leaders in the assault on Socialist orthodoxy. In his initial period of political involvement (1915-1918), Gramsci gravitated toward journalism, at which he was very competent and at times brilliant, and his intellectual influence within the local PSI organization rapidly conferred on him a leadership role in the Turin section of the party. This, however, did not prevent him from taking critical positions in his *Il Grido del Popolo* and *Avanti* articles or from encouraging new oppositional tendencies among the Turin workers. Gramsci was quite modest about his topical contributions to party publications, not only during this period but later: "In ten years of journalism I wrote enough words to fill up fifteen to twenty volumes of 4,000 pages apiece, but it was stuff written for the very day it appeared and I always thought it would be dead the day after..."[4] Though perfectly true at one level, this extreme assessment prematurely confines the early Gramsci to the scrapheap when in fact his work of this period gives us vital insights into his understanding of Italian historical development, the nature of his own political involvement, and the thematic evolution of his overall theoretical work.

Herein lies the value of the Cavalcanti-Piccone anthology, which assembles a representative selection of Gramsci's early work on a broad variety of themes—culture, philosophy, Italian history, the Socialist Party, the Russian Revolution—in systematic and intelligent fashion.[5] This volume provides a much-needed complement to the

3. *Proletarian Order,* p. 64.

4. Quoted from one of Gramsci's prison letters to his sister-in-law, Tatiana, in Giuseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary* (New York, 1971), p. 104.

5. This collection was assembled from materials contained in a number of original Gramsci anthologies published in Italy: Mario Spinella, ed., Antonio Gramsci: *Scritti politici* (Rome, 1967); G. Ferrata and N. Gallo, eds., *2000 pagine di Gramsci* (Milan, 1964); *L'Ordine Nuovo,* third edition (Turin, 1970); and *Scritti giovanili,* third edition (Turin, 1972). The Cavalcanti-Piccone volume includes articles from *Il Grido del Popolo* (which Gramsci edited for a brief period beginning in August, 1917), *Avanti!* (Turin edition), and *L'Ordine Nuovo.* Anyone who has ploughed through Gramsci's early essays and articles knows what a difficult task it is to compile a representative sampling of the "early" Gramsci. In this alone the editors have made a valuable contribution. The only complaint that might be registered concerns the dearth of

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significant Gramsci publications that are already available in English from both the *Ordine Nuovo* (1918-1921) and *Prison Notebooks* (1928-1935) periods.[6] Something of the political and philosophical flavor of the immediate pre-*Biennio Rosso* years—above all the sense of crisis and imminent upheaval that characterized the period—is captured in these writings. So too is the intellectual presence of Croce, Bergson, Sorel, and that brilliant and prolific writer on the "Southern Problem," Gaetano Salvemini, though curiously one detects little of the influence of Antonio Labriola that many Gramsci scholars have seen as crucial to his early theoretical development. Moreover, aside from references to Lenin in the context of the Bolshevik Revolution, one finds scarcely any mention of the major figures in European Marxism—Kautsky, Bernstein, Luxemburg, Plekhanov, Bauer, *et al.* This conspicuous detachment from the Marxism of the Second International was no doubt a source of strength; whatever the case, it does help us understand the eclecticism and the distinctly *Italian* character that permeated Gramsci's thought from beginning to end.

In reading the Cavalcanti-Piccone collection, we find in the early Gramsci an emphasis, however unshaped and fragmentary, on three broad themes: (1) a "creative" revolutionary posture stressing subjective "will" and linked to an anti-positivism grounded in Hegelian-Crocean philosophy; (2) the goal of building an integrated and autonomous proletarian culture that would transform the working masses from oppressed and dehumanized victims of capitalism into revitalized collective architects of a classless society; and (3) a conception of the Italian bourgeoisie as an enfeebled class incapable of bringing into being a modern, secular, liberal order and thus more vulnerable to the incursions of mass upheaval than other European capitalist systems.

Having entered leftist politics at the time neo-Hegelianism began to dominate Italian intellectual life, Gramsci accepted without question the intimate Hegel-Marx connection and rejected from the outset the crude materialist epistemology taken for "Marxism" by the PSI ideologues. Just as Marx's conception of history evolved out of the Hegelian synthesis, so too did Gramsci find his point of departure in Croce. Years later, Gramsci would comment: "In a short introduction to the extract of Croce's *Religione e Serenità* I wrote that just as Hegelianism had been the premise of Marxism in the nineteenth century, so the philosophy of Croce might be the premise of a renewed, contemporary Marxism for our own generation."[7] For the young Gramsci, history was a flowing, open process and politics was shaped more by collective human

*L'Ordine Nuovo* articles, especially those having some bearing on the origins of Gramsci's council theory, as these would have imparted a greater historical and political dimension to the early Crocean orientation.

6. Very little of Gramsci's early writings has been previously translated into English. *New Left Review*, 51 (1968) published some lengthy excerpts from *L'Ordine Nuovo*, mainly on the theme of the councils, under the heading "Soviets in Italy." *New Edinburgh Review* published three special editions on Gramsci in 1974 (nos. 23-24, 25-26, and 27) that included a number of translations from the 1919-20 period. More English translations of Gramsci's prison writings are available, including the large volume edited by Quintin Hoare and Goeffrey Nowell-Smith, *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London, 1971) and the collection of prison letters assembled and translated by Lynne Lawner, *Letters from Prison* (New York, 1975). Still to be made available are the writings from Gramsci's PCI period (1921-26), which include much important material on the demise of the PSI, the rise of fascism, the Comintern, and the role of the revolutionary party. These, of course, are not only interesting in their own right but give us added insight into the theoretical formulations of the *Prison Notebooks*. A good sampling of these writings can be found in *Scritti politici*.

7. Quoted in Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci, op.cit.*, p. 106.

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"will" than by the external power of natural laws; Marx "was not a messiah who left a file of parables pregnant with categorical imperatives, of absolute indisputable norms independent of time and space."[8] Positivism had to be comprehended for what it was—a "scientific superstition" created out of "blind faith" by an intellectual stratum seeking "deliverance" through divine laws. The idea of a linear, material progress toward socialism necessarily generated an historical fatalism that downplayed the task of transforming popular consciousness. Gramsci argued that the economic determinism of the PSI and CGL leaderships became "the doctrine of the proletariat's inertia," typified by the manner in which the CGL theorist Treves "reduced Marx's doctrine to an external scheme or a natural law that inexorably takes place outside of human will, outside of active human associations and the social forces developed by this activity which becomes itself the determinant of progress: the necessary cause of new forms of production."[9] This passage, which so clearly opposes the forces of "natural law" to those of "human will," could easily have come from the *Prison Notebooks*.

Whereas for Gramsci positivism was the philosophical outlook most compatible with reformism, Hegelianism was associated with the development of "critical" or "revolutionary" communism; Croce's stress on the "ethico-political" realm, while perhaps too one-sided in the autonomy it assigned to ideological forces, was nonetheless consistent with an activist stance that saw politically-committed human beings seizing their own historical opportunities. It was the Italian reformists, forever preaching compromise and instrumental pragmatism as the strategic basis of political advance, who emerged as the classic dogmatists and "utopians," for "they are those who mortgage the future and seek to imprison it in their pre-established shapes." Gramsci continues: "They do not understand history as free development of freely born and integrated energies, as something unlike natural evolution, in the same way that man and human associations are different from molecules and aggregates of molecules. They have not learned that freedom is the force immanent in history which blows up all pre-established schemes."[10]

The passing of an historical epoch that Gramsci witnessed from his political vantage point in Turin was hastened by the Bolshevik Revolution, which had far-reaching repercussions in Italy. Gramsci and his Turinese comrades welcomed the Russian upheaval as nothing short of a major turning point in history, the first blow in the shattering of European bourgeois civilization. In "Revolution Against *Capital*," probably the most important of Gramsci's early essays, the Russian Revolution is characterized as an epochal overturning of all the stale, lifeless, dogmatic canons of what had come to be known as "historical materialism"—a reified Marxism, embodied in the positivized interpretations of *Capital* that in Russia (as elsewhere) had become the text of the progressive bourgeoisie. Only by discarding *Capital* (the theoretical compass of the "legal" Marxists), and by generating a uniquely Russian collective revolutionary will could the Bolsheviks have succeeded in conditions never analyzed by Marx or Engels. "Why," asked Gramsci, "should the Russian people wait until the history of England repeats itself in Russia?"[11] While the war played a crucial role in awakening political passions in Russia, there was nothing "determined" about the Revolution itself, nothing that could be neatly fit into any historical model of

8. "Our Marx," in Cavalcanti and Piccone, p. 9.
9. "Critical Criticism," *ibid.*, p. 38.
10. "The Russian Utopia," *ibid.*, p. 153.
11. "The Revolution against *Capital*," *ibid.*, p. 125.

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development.[12]

Gramsci's preoccupation with the theme of collective revolutionary will power and consciousness, which was not only Crocean but also Sorelian and even Bergsonian in inspiration, helps to explain his early interest in the problem of culture—an interest, incidentally, that anticipates the theory of prefigurative struggle sketched in his *Ordine Nuovo* writings and the concept of ideological hegemony outlined in the *Prison Notebooks*. By "culture," Gramsci meant more than those sets of activities conventionally associated with either art or entertainment; he had in mind the entire range of popular ideas, attitudes, habits, etc., that could be seen as ideological mediations in the class struggle, functioning to confine or accelerate the revolutionary process: "Culture is... the organization, the disciplining of one's inner self; it is the appropriation of one's own personality; it is the conquest of a superior consciousness whereby it becomes possible to understand one's own historical value, function in life, rights and duties."[13] The process of cultural renewal was the necessary element in the forging of a new revolutionary collective will. Just as the French Revolution was preceded by the Enlightenment, so would the conditions of future socialist revolutions be shaped by "an intense critical effort of cultural penetration," one in which "the infusion of ideas through groups of men who were initially unresponsive" would instill collective solidarity where before there was only social fragmentation and isolation."[14]

The project of cultural transformation went to the very core of proletarian experience and assumed the potential emergence of a class capable and ideologically prepared to carry out its Marxian project of self-emancipation. Education, knowledge, culture—these would be the tools of the working class in its struggle to free itself from the omnipresent power of the intellectual stratum as a whole.[15] Implicit here was a critique, not only of the prevailing tendencies within Gramsci's own PSI, but also of the "Leninism" that Gramsci embraced so euphorically at this time, for both movements had accepted the Kautskyian assumption of a social (and political)

12. "Events have exploded the critical schemes within which the history of Russia would have had to develop according to the canons of historical materialism... The Bolsheviks are not Marxists, that is all: they have not compiled an external doctrine of dogmatic, indisputable statements on the basis of the Master's works. They live the Marxist thought that never dies, which is the continuation of Italian and German idealistic thought, which in Marx was contaminated with positivist and naturalistic encrustations. And this thought always sees man—not brute economic facts—as the supreme factor in history: the society of men who draw close to and understand each other, who develop by means of these contacts (civilization) a collective, social will." *Ibid.*, pp. 123-24. In contrast to what has often been assumed, Gramsci was a close student of the Bolshevik Revolution and was relatively well-informed about post-revolutionary events; the information coming from Russia, however, was often one-sided and misleading, to the extent that Gramsci along with others tended to over-romanticize the Bolshevik regime, or to mistake its claims for actual political reality. Thus, Gramsci saw the October Revolution as a triumph of human freedom and democracy, as a social transformation rooted in the soviets and councils. As late as 1921, he seemed oblivious to the centralizing and bureaucratic tendencies at work within the party-state and the economy, and in general he ignored the vast dilemmas and obstacles encountered by the Bolsheviks—no doubt at least partly because negative features were being stressed daily by the bourgeois press. Yet one cannot fail to detect a certain innocence and naivete in Gramsci about Russia, and this remained with him until his death. For other examples of Gramsci's initial optimism, see his essays "Notes on the Russian Revolution" and "Lenin's Work" in the present anthology.

13. "Socialism and Culture," *ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

15. "Freedom First," *ibid.*, p. 51: "Education, culture and the organized dissemination of knowledge constitute the independence of the masses from the intelligentsia. The most intelligent phase of the struggle against the despotism of professional intellectuals and the trust in divine law consists in the intensification of culture and the raising of consciousness."

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division of labor between intellectuals and masses. Gramsci sought to solve this problem, since he felt that popular apathy and submissiveness would only be reproduced in a new context; new hierarchies would always emerge so long as the popular energies of the masses continued to be suppressed: "What takes place is not the result of what a few want, but of the fact that the great mass of men submit to the will of the few. They let things go... They allow men to rise to power which only mutiny will be able to overthrow. In fact, the fate which seems to dominate history is nothing but the illusory appearance of this indifference and of this absenteeism... The destiny of an epoch is manipulated according to narrow visions, immediate purposes, the ambitions and personal passions of small, active groups."[16]

To sweep away this indifference, to raise human beings out of their long-ingrained lethargy and inertia, to combat the whole system of ruling values upon which class domination rests, this is a guiding motif of Gramscian Marxism even before 1918, a motif that is strategically elaborated in the *Prison Notebooks* as the "war of position." But what precisely is the new cultural paradigm anticipated by Gramsci here and what forms can it be expected to assume? There is a certain frustrating vagueness to Gramsci's early writings on such points, almost as if the revolutionary process were so remote as to negate any attempt at concretization. Only the Hegelian generalities are affirmed: the transition from bourgeois discipline ("mechanical and authoritative") to socialist discipline ("autonomous and spontaneous")[17] and from individualism to collectivism (in which "bourgeois individualism necessarily creates in the proletariat this tendency to collectivism" and "the individual-association is contraposed to the individual-capitalist").[18]

Yet even in these brief and topical essays, Gramsci did present an analysis of the historical conditions in Italy that he thought would facilitate such a process of ideological-cultural regeneration among the proletarian masses. The key was the political weakness of the Italian bourgeoisie—in contrast, for example, to the relative strength of its counterpart in England, France, and the United States. Because the 19th century *Risorgimento* failed to establish a full national unification based upon liberal principles, capitalist domination remained partial and fragmentary, confined to its regional base in the North. Taking his cue from Croce's important work on Italian history but moving theoretically beyond the Neapolitan, Gramsci argued that liberalism had never furnished any "coherent ideological direction" for the Italian state or any legitimate "principle of order" for civil society as a whole.

The partial character of the *Risorgimento* explains why the Italian bourgeoisie had become so ideologically narrow and short-sighted in its outlook, why it built its rule

16. "Indifferents," *ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

17. "Discipline," *ibid.*, p. 49.

18. "Individualism and Collectivism," *ibid.*, p. 61: Gramsci does further articulate the individualism-collectivism dialectic, which he derives from the central Hegelian-Crocean problematic of alienation, as follows: "For the proletariat, organization within its own class already necessarily replaces individualism, absorbing whatever there is in it that is eternal and rational: the sense of one's responsiblity, the spirit of enterprise, the respect for others, the conviction that freedom for all is the sole guarantee of individual freedoms, that the observation of contracts is an indispensable condition of civil existence... (Moreover), the wealth that each can produce above and beyond immediate needs belongs to the collectivity and constitutes the social patrimony: the exchangeability of the means of production is no longer necessary to stimulate capabilities and initiative, because labor has become a moral duty, activity is joy, and not a cruel struggle." Still, this vision remains somewhat abstract and utopian, lacking the historical grounding and theoretical depth of even the early Marx, and barely hinting at the constituent elements of a transformative culture that had already become integral to Gramsci's thinking.

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upon the most retrograde policies—petty economic nationalism, protectionism, corporativism, right-wing reformism—and why it needed *trasformismo* to survive. Gramsci identified two dimensions to this problem. The first involved the "Southern Problem": the incapacity of capitalism to expand into Southern Italy, with the resultant division of the peninsula into an industrial North and a semi-feudal, traditional South. If Turin epitomized the urban culture of modern capitalism, the *Mezzogiorno* perpetuated a social life rooted in ancient habits and superstitions. The second dimension was that of the Church and Catholicism, which was able to contain and disperse the idoelogical advances of the bourgeoisie while maintaining its own political hegemony: "So, degenerate and corrupt, without unity and national hierarchy, liberalism ended up subordinated to Catholicism, whose social energies are instead strongly organized and centralized."[19] For these two reasons, then, a modern, secular bourgeois state—a "liberal or parliamentary state typical of capitalist, laissez-faire economy"—did not achieve full expression in Italy.

Gramsci concluded from this analysis that the ruling forces in Italy were uniquely vulnerable to ideological-political assault. The potential of capitalism to extend its domination and control popular insurgency generally depended upon the scope and firmness of its mass legitimacy. The failure of the Italian bourgeoisie to fulfill the unifying myths and objectives of the *Risorgimento*, its inability to constitute itself as a dynamic historical class, would allow the proletarian-socialist movement to step into the ideological breach and assume for itself the mission of national "renewal." This theme is vital, and Gramsci returns to it again in the "Lyons Theses" (where he seeks to formulate the theoretical foundations of a new "national-popular" strategy for the PCI) and in the *Prison Notebooks*. In his early writings, however, Gramsci drew more limited but nonetheless important consequences: the weakness and provincialism of capitalism in Italy—and with it the absence of strong parliamentary institutions—undercut the reformist solution that seemed fashionable in Northern Europe, and called for a more frontal offensive.

The composite picture that emerges of the young Gramsci assembled by Cavalcanti and Piccone, of a Gramsci writing on the eve of the great *Biennio Rosso*, is one perhaps best depicted by Gwyn Williams as a theorist whose vision was "distinctly mythic, grandiose, and semi-utopian."[20] The identification of "vision" with Gramsci is most appropriate, for in these years and up until the debacle of autumn 1920, he often conveyed a mood of almost messianic optimism—much like the Marx of the *Communist Manifesto*. It was a "vision" generated out of a hybrid, poorly-integrated theoretical synthesis of Croce, Lenin, and Sorel which, inevitably, produced the kind of ambiguities and inconsistencies encountered in Gramsci's initial writings (reflected, for example, in his confused assessment of the Russian Revolution). This aspect of the early Gramsci explains the absence of any comprehensive strategic thinking until the events of the *Biennio Rosso* impose it on him; one looks in vain for any discussion of the problem of the state, political power, the role of the party (or councils) in this period. Yet it would be mistaken to dismiss the importance of this formative work to Gramsci's later development—much less to posit a theoretical break between the "young" Gramsci and the "mature" thinker of the *Prison Notebooks*—given the broad thematic

19. "The Italian Catholics," *ibid.*, pp. 112-13. Gramsci's analysis of the Italian bourgeoisie and of Catholicism was the major premise underlying his conception of the "Southern problem" and his optimism regarding the revolutionary potential of the Italian peasants. For him, the struggle against capitalism and the struggle against clericalism-feudalism would merge into one large global movement incorporating both industrial workers and peasants.

20. *Proletarian Order, op.cit.*, p. 91.

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unity that is undeniably present.

The popular revolt that swept Italy during the Biennio Rosso, so thoroughly documented by Williams and Spriano, irreversibly transfigured the old political terrain: the Socialist Party (and not capitalism) crumbled from its own internal crisis, a new but doomed revolutionary left emerged out of the ashes, and the bourgeoisie—frightened and desperate after having barely survived the proletarian onslaught of 1920—began searching for more authoritarian methods to ensure its domination. Despite its theoretical commitment to the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and its adherence to the Comintern after 1919, the PSI leadership struggled valiantly to institutionally mediate the insurrection in order to preserve the reformist hegemony so patiently constructed by Turati. The moment of crisis summoned no heroic political response from the PSI and CGL hierarchies (even the maximalist Serrati continued to assert only the primacy of "party unity"), but only a great "fear of revolution" that is explained more by their deep entrenchment in bourgeois institutions than by any presumed collapse of moral will or courage. Against this poured out the spontaneous energies of large radicalized sectors of the working class and peasants—a movement directed as much against the established Marxist organizations as against the capitalist order itself. This "ultra-leftism," which Lenin at first praised but later harshly criticized in his *Left-Wing Communism,* took two broad forms: a quasi-syndicalist council communism that originated in Turin and culminated in the *Ordine Nuovo* movement of which Gramsci was one of the main architects, and an ultra-centralist vanguardism inspired by Bordiga and his followers. Although the split between these two forces would leave an enduring imprint on the Italian political landscape, as would the classic debates between Gramsci and Bordiga, their common hostility to reformism and parliamentarism made them fleeting allies in early 1921 when, in the midst of the political debris, they joined forces to found the *Partito Comunista d'Italia* as an alternative to the discredited PSI.

The Gramsci-Bordiga split, which permeated the entire *Biennio Rosso* atmosphere and continued through the early PCI years, reflected fundamentally opposing theoretical-strategic perspectives that were rooted in differing conceptions of the revolutionary process itself. However, in neither the Spriano nor Williams books do these debates, which have commanded the attention of the Italian left for more than half a century, emerge with any degree of theoretical or political clarity. Spriano, in his tightly-knit account of the factory occupations, overlooks this dimension in favor of the exhaustive historical description of events for which he is well-known; the theoretical-strategic issues lurk in the background, but they are overwhelmed by the everyday rhythm of statements and counter-statements, actions and counter-actions. Williams does explore these debates, even if not systematically, but he sees the differences essentially as a function of Gramsci's political immaturity, of his failure to grasp the primary role of a centralized and disciplined vanguard party. Thus, in Williams' treatment, Gramsci's preoccupation with proletarian self-activity, the factory councils, and cultural transformation inevitably yield to the more "advanced" and realistic Leninist model that Bordiga had been pushing all along—a model that is presented as the only sensible alternative to either the chaos of anarchism or the barbaric order of fascism. After watching the collapse of the council movement, Gramsci did move in this Jacobin direction—as even a modest acquaintance with his later writings reveals—but his basic disagreements with Bordiga continued until the end. These disagreements could not be overcome because their foundation was so deeply philosophical, Gramsci's Hegelianism colliding directly with Bordiga's mechanical Marxism at virtually ever level of theory and strategy. The historical drama that

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both Spriano and Williams describe so graphically tends to obscure this range of issues or else collapse them into a matter of tactics; the thematic continuity of Gramscian theory, comprehended as the *elaboration* (not the overturning) of a critical Hegelian perspective already present in his pre-1919 work, is never fully grasped.

The mass struggles of 1918-1920 gave powerful impetus to three major tendencies—anarchism, syndicalism, and above all, a council communism born out of the Turin working-class movement. By mid-1919, tens of thousands of workers, both skilled and unskilled, entered the rapidly-spreading *congisli di fabbrica*, which grew out of the CGL-affiliated grievance committees (*comissioni interne*) at Fiat and other industrial enterprises once proletarian demands could no longer be absorbed within the union framework. These council-based struggles inspired new modes of class consciousness and, ultimately, pressed for a revolutionary strategy that directly challenged the dominant PSI-CGL reformist model, not only in Piedmont but elsewhere. Though neither anarchist nor syndicalist strictly speaking, the council movement assimilated much that was positive in each of these anti-union, anti-reformist tendencies and emphasized many of the same Sorelian goals: direct democracy at the point of production, working-class solidarity, and collective self-management of factories. In May 1919 the Turinese council revolutionaries founded the journal *L'Ordine Nuovo*, which through the efforts of Gramsci, Togliatti, Tasca, Terracini and others, sought to establish a theoretical-strategic grounding for what was an explosive but still highly-amorphous popular insurgency. Anticipating, in Gramsci's words, the beginning of a "new era of humanity," the journal set out to analyze and facilitate such a transition; the factory councils were envisaged as the first step toward more mature political forms of socialist democracy (soviets) as the "embryo" of a new proletarian socialist state. At the same time, the content of *L'Ordine Nuovo* was very eclectic and was also, to a surprising extent, influenced by working-class movements outside of Italy (the shop-steward movement in England, the IWW in the United States, the soviets in Russia). Gramsci and Tasca were easily the dominant intellectual forces, but the contributors from abroad were many and diverse, inclusing Henri Barbusse, Bertrand Russell, John Reed, Max Eastman, and Romain Rolland as well as Sorel and Lenin. Yet this periodical, closely linked as it was to the council movement, appealed primarily to a working-class audience because it was able to capture the spirit of the moment and translate it into popular language. Gramsci noted that "The workers loved *L'Ordine Nuovo*...because in it they found something of themselves, the best part of themselves; because in it they sense their own inner striving: how can we be free? How can we become ourselves?"[21]

This is not the place to spell out in detail the theoretical underpinnings of *Ordinovista* politics at the time of the *Biennio Rosso*. Plenty of materials in both Italian and English are available on this subject, including segments of the volumes under review—though neither Williams nor Spriano, despite the richness of their historical insights, contributes significantly to our theoretical understanding of either the movement or the period.[22] It is worthwhile, however, to briefly affirm what Williams and Spriano overlook: Gramsci's role in *L'Ordine Nuovo* and his conception of the factory councils must be seen as an extension of his earlier Crocean and Sorelian preoccupations, indeed as the concrete institutional embodiment of those initial (however loosely articulated) theoretical stirrings. In this phase of Gramsci's

21. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 95, from *L'Ordine Nuovo* (August 14, 1920).

22. For further theoretical discussion of the council period, see Cammett, *op.cit.*, chapter 4, and Carl Boggs, *Gramsci's Marxism* (London and New York, 1976), chapter 4.

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development, the councils appear as the expression of proletarian self-emancipation, collective solidarity, and cultural renewal because, in contrast to the bureaucratic party and trade union structures, they are rooted in everyday life and thereby potentially prefigure the future liberated society. The councils impart *form* to Gramsci's Hegelian concentration on ideological-cultural struggle; they mediate between the universal project of socialist transformation and localized popular revolt, "for it is in these new configurations that the mass acquires consciousness of its historical responsibilities and of its definite mission. It is the *councils* then which are the crucial *areas of translation*."[23]

Gramsci's conception of the revolutionary process stands qualitatively apart from the Social Democratic and Leninist-Bordighist models. In Sorelian fashion, the councils function to solidify a previously "shapeless" mass consciousness and to unleash class warfare as autonomous structures with an identity separate from both the institutions of bourgeois democracy and the bureaucratic leftist organizations. On one level the councils serve to transform alienated wage-laborers into collectively-conscious producers, while on another they embody in primitive form the features of a socialist and democratic state. Gramsci held to the position that a non-hierarchical and non-bureaucratic politics could not be built on the terrain of bourgeois democracy; looking to the councils and the soviets (which Gramsci mistakenly thought were the basis of revolutionary power in Russia), he insisted that "the socialist state already exists potentially in the institutions of social life characteristic of the exploited laboring class."[24] True, the silhouette of the party always looms in the background—though its role in the revolutionary process and its relationship to the councils was never satisfactorily discussed in any of the *Ordine Nuovo* writings—but Gramsci's break with the major radical currents (including syndicalism) in the course of his grappling with the problems of council communism cannot be questioned.

One reason the factory councils occupied center stage in 1919-1920, aside from their very real proliferation in the Piedmont region, was the sense of impending upheaval that swept through the Italian left. Gramsci felt this, at times adopting a kind of eschatological optimism regarding new opportunities that would be created by the political chaos; taking a cue from his early writings but giving them a new twist reminiscent of the most simplistic crisis theory, he proclaimed that capitalism had lost the historical initiative, that bourgeois society was crumbling everywhere, that out of the catastrophe would come renewal and the seeds of collective revolutionary order manifested in the organic diffusion of popular assemblies such as the councils.

The exuberance of Gramsci and the *Ordinovisti*, however, was short-lived, giving way to disillusionment after the collapse of the factory occupations in the fall of 1920. Whereas the council movement won great victories in Turin, it lacked the power to sustain them; the organs of workers' control that at one moment galvanized the entire Piedmont proletariat rapidly vanished the next moment. Hence, the masses that had so resolutely detached themselves from the established institutions were just as completely reintegrated into them, and the "historical initiative" soon passed to the

23. Quoted in *Proletarian Order, op.cit.*, p. 165, from *L'Ordine Nuovo* (November 29, 1919). In his essay "Governing Party and Governing Class," Gramsci adds that "the working class must train itself, must educate itself in social management, must acquire the culture and psychology of a ruling class, must acquire them by its own methods and systems, through meetings, congresses, discussions, mutual education. The factory councils have been a first form of this historical experience for the Italian working class as it moves towards self-government in the workers' state." *L'Ordine Nuovo*, March 6, 1920.

24. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 103, from *L'Ordine Nuovo* (June 21, 1919).

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Italian bourgeoisie. This sequence of developments was due not only to the paralysis of the PSI, but to the internal weaknesses of the council movement itself, as the accounts in Williams and Spriano clearly indicate. The weaknesses were many, the most crucial being a fatal political isolation bred of Piedmont "exceptionalism": during this period the region was the base of Italian industrialism, typified by a system of factory production and an urban working-class culture duplicated nowhere else on the peninsula. Not surprisingly, the council movement spawned by these conditions was itself unique; it nourished a regionalism which ruled out attempts to expand *Ordinovista* politics beyond its narrow Piedmont origins. The characterization of Turin as the "Italian Petrograd" only reinforced its identification as the center of the most mature or "advanced" proletarian movement in Italy—a sense of superiority that was theoretically justified by the exclusivist and moralistic productivism (again the influence of Sorel) advanced by Gramsci and others. (After all, the *consigli*, in theory and practice, were organs constituted from only the ranks of those laboring at the point of production.)[25] Within the city itself, a phenomenon known as "factory egoism" appeared, limiting the possibilities of coordinated struggle and planning even among the Turinese workers.[26] Cut off from the rest of Italy and politically alienated from the PSI and CGL, the council movement was inevitably engulfed by its own isolation as much as by the force and cunning of the bourgeoisie. Any critique of the *Ordinovisti* for their failure to pose the question of armed insurrection and seizure of state power is thus abstract.

Bordiga of course seized upon these weaknesses to drive home his attack on the factory council movement, which he pushed to the extreme lengths: the councils were described in the pages of *Il Soviet* (Bordiga's Naples-based journal) as a "reformist modification of the trade union structure"—a judgment distilled no doubt from Tasca's conception of merging councils with trade unions but antithetical to Gramsci's theory and to the main thrust of the movement. For Bordiga, the councils represented a diversion from the principal task of constructing a revolutionary party capable of conquering state power. Rejecting both reformism and councillism in the most absolute terms, the Neapolitan looked to a cohesive vanguard organization that could decisively insert itself into the crisis. It was the Bordiga faction that took the initiative of breaking with the PSI and forming a new communist party (a project that Gramsci hesitatingly came around to joining), who insisted upon an unrelenting assault on reformists and "opportunists," a strict definition of the proletariat, and total political abstention from all bourgeois institutions.

To this Gramsci opposed a classical Leninist position; he argued that the parliamentary-electorial terrain could never be used *strategically* to advance socialism, but should be employed tactically to exploit the political contradictions of capitalism.[27] In general, Gramsci's differences with Bordiga (whatever the outcome of

25. Gramsci did on occasion refer to a larger *political* transformation that would lead to the development of councils (or soviets) within the community as a whole, and he even envisaged the project of creating a *national* assembly of councils, but these ideals were remote, a distant vision that had no relation to the actual Turin council movement.

26. The "petty bourgeois" mentality that historically typified skilled workers within the most technologically advanced sectors of production did not seem to be very widespread in Turin, judging from these accounts at any rate. Indeed, many skilled workers (e.g., engineers and metallurgists) were in the forefront of revolutionary activity during the *Biennio Rosso*. Unfortunately, neither Williams nor Spriano analyzes this problem.

27. Even Lenin criticized Bordiga's extreme abstentionism on the basis (correct, as it turned out) of his reading of a few numbers of *Il Soviet*. See *Left-Wing Communism* (New York, 1940), p. 48. At the Second Comintern Congress in July, 1920, Lenin takes on Bordiga even more

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the council insurgency) were not over the latter's "Leninism" but rather over what Gramsci perceived to be a mechanical, ultra-centralist interpretation of Lenin. (Keep in mind too that Gramsci's "Leninism" at this time was the Lenin of "all power to the soviets.") If Gramsci was too naively utopian in his expectation that the councils would lead to a new proletarian state, Bordiga on the other side placed excessive faith in a small, insulated nucleus of professional revolutionaries whose actions would be governed by correct theory. In Bordiga's contempt for "spontaneity" and local structures Gramsci saw an insensitivity to the complex process of ideological mass preparation that produced a manipulative, elitist approach to revolutionary politics—what in the *Prison Notebooks* he later described as "Cadornism" or "Volunteerism."

Such fundamental disagreements, which were overt and heated during the *Biennio Rosso* but temporarily muted at the founding of the PCI, resurfaced in 1922 and lurked behind every important party debate until fascist repression made such divisions meaningless. Here, Williams downplays the difference to the extent that we wind up with a picture of Bordiga as a clear-thinking "Leninist," with Gramsci tardily seeing the light and gradually moving toward the Bordigan position. Williams simultaneously understates the extreme vanguardism in Bordiga and the prefigurative element in Gramsci; while the role of the party figures more prominently in Gramsci's political thought after 1921, it should not be forgotten that he consistently had in mind a *different conception* of the party and of the revolutionary strategy it would pursue than did Bordiga.[28]

As things turned out, the events of 1920 rapidly outpaced these strategic discussions; and the Italian left itself was completely overwhelmed. The class strife that built toward the climactic moments of the *Biennio Rosso* began to intensify in early 1920: increased scope and militancy of the council movement set the stage for a powerful counter-offensive by industrialists in Piedmont and Liguria, which involved massive lockouts and troop occupations of many factories. What followed was a general strike in Piedmont, "defensive" in its inception, that mobilized more than 500,000 workers for most of the month of April. Williams describes this as "probably the most remarkable moment in Italian working-class history, perhaps the major event in the postwar history of the European working class."[29] Such an assessment was shared by neither the PSI nor CGL leaderships, however, for they maintained an attitude of fearful antagonism toward the strike wave that was sweeping through Northern Italy (the Milan *Avanti!*, for example, refused to publish Turin strike bulletins). The appeal for an Italian general strike went unheeded—the PSI dismissing it as adventurism and the Bordighists offering only "principled doctrinal criticism" to the effect that the *state* and not the factory must be viewed as the primary arena of

directly: "Comrade Bordiga, you are well aware that here in Russia we have expressed our wish to destroy the bourgeois parliament, in practice as well as theory. But you have forgotten that this is impossible without long preparation, and that in the majority of countries it is not yet possible to destroy parliament with one single blow. We are forced to carry on the struggle to destroy parliament within parliament itself." Quoted in Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci, op.cit.*, p. 136.

28. Williams makes the comparison as follows: "The centrality of Bordiga's scheme was therefore the party, built strictly on Bolshevik principles, the concentration of individual conversions to living communist in the service of a class. Gramsci. . .was much slower to arrive at this point (which Bordiga had reached, in fact, by 1912). *But arrive at it he did.* Later history and even historiography has masked the essential fact that there was, on the central issue of the historical definition of communism in Italy, a *fundamental consonance* between Bordiga and Gramsci." *Proletarian Order*, p. 177.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

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struggle. Catastrophic defeat was unavoidable; so too were the bitter recriminations that followed, producing what Williams calls a "terrible gulf of hatred" between the Turin radicals and the PSI-CGL hierarchies.

The collapse of the Piedmont general strike generated an atmosphere of retreat and confusion on the Italian left, followed by a mood of reformism that permeated even the council movement. With the factory councils in disarray, many of the *Ordinovisti* began to look in different directions—Tasca toward a reconstituted trade union structure, Togliatti and his new "electionist communist" group toward parliamentary politics. Gramsci, however, stubbornly stood his ground. For him, the defeat was only a surface phenomenon, a temporary setback at the level of institutional politics; the general strike, though it achieved few tangible gains, did raise working-class consciousness and inspired new modes of struggle. Gramsci thus remained optimistic: beneath the façade of order and stability could be detected a rapidly-decomposing bourgeois society in which the old class and power relations would continue to be sharply contested. Despite the chaos of the councils, he persisted in a strategic commitment to a total break with bourgeois structures, arguing that "contractual" organizations such as parties and trade unions would inevitably impede the revolutionary process, which must unfold "underground, in the obscurity of the factory and the consciousness of the countless multitudes that capitalism subjects to its laws."[30] (Ironically, in stressing the need for such a break, Gramsci appears closer to Bordiga than to his *Ordinovista* comrades Tasca and Togliatti.)

Events would soon validate Gramsci's analysis, for just five months after the Turin general strike came the great sequel—the occupation of the factories—that seemed to put Italy at the edge of revolution. An upsurge that engulfed most of Northern Italy during the entire month of September, 1920, and involved the occupation of more than 200 factories by 500,000 workers, it revitalized the dormant council movement and catalyzed a renewal of syndicalism. As in April, the upheavals began modestly as a defensive move to preempt a lockout by industrialists over a bargaining stalemate—an action designed, as Tasca put it, to be a "simple substitute for the strike weapon." But the turmoil that grew out of attempts to take over and manage the factories, under chaotic and burdensome conditions, quickly politicized the workers and broadened the agitation far beyond its April confines. From Milan, Genoa, and Turin the occupations spread to Rome, Salerno, Reggio-Emilia, Padua and elsewhere, moving through the major industrial sectors: autos, machine tools, textiles, rubber, footwear, chemicals, beer, etc. While the council structures as such did not spread beyond their Piedmont origins (the few that did being quickly absorbed by the unions), the occupations everywhere were infused with a sense of proletarian solidarity and a drive towards workers' control. Along with the red and black flags hoisted atop factories went the banners reading "We want not wealth but freedom." Production output in the occupied sectors was lower than normal, mainly because of the confusion and material shortages, but by all accounts the takeovers proceeded in orderly and peaceful fashion, typified by a kind of "communist" regimen: "No one could enter or leave without permission. Workers were searched at the exits and thieves severely punished. Alcohol was strictly forbidden. The corps of red guards kept watch inside the plants to check for possible trouble-makers."[31] Within two weeks the occupations were in full swing and a revolutionary euphoria spread through the air; the assembly of the workers' leagues proclaimed that "The struggle of the metal workers [who were

30. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 214, from *L'Ordine Nuovo* (June 5, 1920).
31. Spriano, *The Occupation of the Factories*, p. 65.

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the first to act] opens a new era in the class struggle which will close only with the establishment of workers' control over all production." [32] The industrialists too thought revolution was imminent; Giovanni Agnelli, convinced that capitalism was too badly maimed to resurrect itself, was on the verge of surrendering Fiat-Centro to the occupying workers, asking "How can you build anything with the help of 25,000 enemies?" [33] Yet, within less than a month after it began, the occupations had run their course, leaving in their wake an exhausted and embittered proletariat that could no longer summon the energy to combat the bourgeoisie, not to mention the entire Socialist party and trade union apparatus as well. Once again, the insurgency could not sustain any revolutionary alternative to the reformist PSI-CGL leaderships.

The failure of the occupations resulted, not from their *abandonment* by the PSI hierarchy and even less from actual or threatened state repression, but from a process of skillful cooptation that involved the collaboration of government, the progressive industrialists (e.g., Agnelli and Olivetti), and the trade unions. This was what Spriano calls "Giolitti's masterpiece"—the final, gallant moment in the old pre-fascist scheme of *trasformismo*, the last, desperate attempt to save Italian capitalism by means of an elite-engineered "reformist solution." At the peak of the crisis, Giolitti was able to usurp the initiative from the leftist militants who, as Spriano argues, floundered without a sense of history and without the capacity to translate their struggles onto the political terrain.

What did emerge from the *Biennio Rosso* was a vague, CGL-initiated principle of "union control" which on paper meant equal trade union involvement in enterprise management and state economic planning, but which in reality meant very little, especially with the growing reactionary counter-offensive that would soon make a mockery of such agreements. So while the triumvirate of organizational forces managed to coax the workers out of the plants behind the rather mystical formula of "union control" (a task made easier by the demoralization that had set in by late September), the anticipated "new era" of institutionalized class relations—the prospect of a reconsolidated capitalism on reformist footing designed to augment productivity and labor discipline—would die early under the fascist avalanche. Yet from the outset Giolitti's plan was marked for what it was—a skillful bourgeois maneuver. Even Serrati reacted angrily: "It is evident that the control won over the factories, once it starts to work, can only be either mystification or corruption. If it becomes effective, it will inevitably transform workers into interested aides to bourgeois management." [34]

In the end, Gramsci was correct in his analysis of the Italian bourgeoisie; it was unquestionably a weak, incohesive social and political force that could not rule on its own. Capitalism needed the crutch of *trasformismo*. But this weakness, which Gramsci originally thought would favor the left, ultimately favored just the opposite, clearing the way to Europe's first fascist dictatorship. Giolitti's "order" collapsed, giving way to Mussolini's "order." After the failure of the occupation of the factories, which brought to a close the hopes of the *Biennio Rosso*, Gramsci in his own depression prophetically grasped this new twist to his argument: "the political power of capitalism today can realize itself only in a military coup d'etat and the attempt to rivet an iron nationalist dictatorship which will drive the brutalized Italian masses to restore the economy by the armed plunder of neighboring countries." [35]

32. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 66.
33. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 123.
34. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 109.
35. Quoted in *Proletarian Order*, p. 282, from *L'Ordine Nuovo* (October 9, 1920).

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Perhaps the single most important historical generalization to emerge from the Williams and Spriano volumes is that the failures—or more properly speaking, the limitations—of the *Biennio Rosso* were internal to the left itself. However much leftist historians insist upon characterizing the political conditions of 1918-1920 Italy as a "revolutionary situation," it would be hard to demonstrate that the masses were in fact prepared to carry out any revolutionary transformation. This should not be confused with the question of armed *insurrection*, though here too the degree of preparedness was not equal to the task. Commenting on the occupations, Tasca wrote that "armed insurrection was impossible because nothing was ready;" another Turinese militant at Fiat-Centro estimated that a sortie from the factories to engage in armed combat in the streets would be finished in ten minutes, given the primitive weaponry and limited ammunition available to the workers. The problem was more deeply political in nature: the movement, though militant and broadly supported, could never transcend its own divisive and self-destructive parochialism. In the absence of any geographical or political coordinating "center," without any real links of communication, the insurgency was destined to wind up trapped in its own directionless spontaneity. The sharp fragmentation of popular forces from factory to factory, city to city, and region to region—in part a continuation of the Italian legacy of *campanilismo*—arrested the movement short of the political-institutional sphere, which is ultimately ceded to the liberal-reformist alliance.

From this Williams and Spriano both conclude that the key missing ingredient needed to convert chaos into purpose, defeat into revolution, was a globalizing force in the presence of a vanguard revolutionary party. Williams points out that "Every factory looked to its own defenses, like a *militia*. There was no coordination. There was no communist party."[36] Such an organization, presumably, would have supplied the general direction, planning, and leadership necessary to pull the popular movement out of its "pre-political" morass; unified and disciplined, it would have been in a position to seize upon the moment of crisis that the left had long been awaiting. In other words, Bordiga, despite his annoying sectarianism, had essentially the right idea.

This Leninist analysis, however, is only superficially valid, for the problem must be confronted at yet a deeper level: the collapse of the *Biennio Rosso* is ultimately explained by the ideological character of the industrial workers. To whatever extent the crisis might have permitted a revolutionary seizure of power, in retrospect it is clear that no cohesive *popular* force was prepared to initiate and carry out a thoroughgoing transformative process. The proletarian masses of the North, despite their heroic spirit and innovative struggles, generally failed to move beyond the narrow limits of their spontaneism; moreover, they were almost totally cut off from the South and the islands, which meant that any socialist government owing its support to the "industrial triangle" would unavoidably reproduce the old regional divisions. From the standpoint of the ideological development of the Italian workers, then, this period cannot be accurately viewed as a "revolutionary situation" that required for its complete historical actualization only a vanguard party capable of unifying the amorphous masses. This very amorphousness, manifested in the "factory egoism," localism, and feeble coordination of even the most advanced Piedmont struggles, was itself a sign that socialist consciousness was lacking—that civil society had yet to undergo any significant transformation—and suggested that a vanguardist solution would have meant an even more mechanical imposition of centralized

36. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

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political force than was the case in Russia.

Even Gramsci, whose optimism led him to stress the "actuality" of revolution and to exaggerate the revolutionary potential of the Turin workers, reluctantly arrived at these conclusions in the very midst of the factory occupations when he observed that "the enemy to combat and overcome will no longer be outside the proletariat, will no longer be an external physical power, but will be the proletariat itself" which "will have to combat the 'bourgeois' lying in ambush for him."[37] Here is the theme of ideological "hegemony"—the penetration of bourgeois attitudes, values, social relations into the popular consciousness—that shaped both his early and later writings. The Bordighist approach, in its Jacobin preoccupation with organizational identity, leadership, and political power, thus side-stepped this entire problem of mass consciousness.[38]

At the same time, neither Gramsci nor any of the other *Ordinovisti* retreated into the sphere of ideology as a means of avoiding the organizational question; on the contrary, the conception of the revolutionary party begins to find its way into Gramsci's thought after 1920, although his vision of a "mass" or "national-popular" party distinct from Bordiga's more centralist model remains only vaguely formulated before 1926. As the fascist offensive that followed the eclipse of the *Biennio Rosso* threw the left, and especially the PSI, into a state of paralysis, Bordiga's power-oriented vanguardism gained in appeal while the *Ordinovista* councilism appeared more and more anachronistic. The Bordighists were thus in a position to impose their vision on the nascent PCI, which consequently bore all the features of a disciplined, sectarian organization during the formative 1921-23 period.

Gramsci himself was an extremely depressed and marginal figure at this time, fortunate indeed not to be excluded from any leadership role in the new party. It is tempting to interpret these developments, following Williams and Spriano, as the inevitable triumph of party over councils, centralism over spontaneism, to which Gramsci was bound to yield through the inexorable flow of events and logic. But nothing could be more misleading. Gramsci's imminent rise to a position of intellectual and political leadership in the PCI—not to mention the entire corpus of his writings—reveals that his deep antagonisms toward the Bordighist model never disappeared, but were merely suppressed or muted for a brief time (presumably in the interests of party unity). If Gramsci did in fact enter a "Jacobin" phase, his philosophy and revolutionary strategy nonetheless remain firmly stamped with the imprint of his early Hegelianism and councilism—the very basis of Gramsci's Marxism that somehow is obscured in each of these accounts.

For Williams and Spriano, consequently, the factory councils abruptly and unceremoniously disappear from the political arena, never to be examined in their larger historical dimension; what the authors assume, but never adequately spell out, is the obsolescence of the councils after the death of the *Biennio Rosso* and the founding of the PCI. Although both volumes explore the postwar proletarian upheavals in great detail, including lively descriptions of the councils in actual operation, we find no real theoretical assessment of the *meaning* of the Italian council movement. What precisely *were* the councils, and what was their revolutionary

37. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

38. Speaking from afar, at the Third Comintern Congress, Clara Zetkin expressed the matter well: "it was not simply a matter of putting the PSI on trial... I see something else, namely, that the masses who were then in ferment in Italy had made no greater progress than their leaders. Otherwise, comrades, if the masses had really been animated by a revolutionary will, if they had been conscious, they would...have booed offstage their trembling union and political leaders and taken up the fight themselves." Quoted in *The Occupation of the Factories*, p. 167. Spriano appears to be more sensitive to this problem than Williams.

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potential, if any? To what extent did the Turin factory councils encourage the kind of proletarian self-activity and collective participation that the *Ordinovisti* had theoretically elaborated? What was the social composition of the councils? Were they, as Sergio Bologna has argued in the case of the German workers' councils, the expression of the most highly technical and skilled sector of the labor force—the sector most likely to adopt a craft-oriented, professional, "petty bourgeois" attitude toward work—and thus destined to become anachronistic with the rise of the mass-production work in advanced capitalism?[39] While Turinese councilism developed as a force hostile to the bourgeois political terrain—to parties, elections, legislative assemblies, etc.—and favorably disposed toward localism and spontaneism, did not Gramsci's own efforts to theoretically synthesize the realms of politics and economics, party and councils, suggest the outlines of a more complex strategic model limited to neither vanguardist nor spontaneist extremes? A deeper probing of some of these inquiries would have enabled Williams and Spriano to analyze the council movement more comprehensively, situate it historically, and specify its broader strategic implications. Their timidity on these issues masks an underlying Bordighism that, because it is opposed to no other serious revolutionary strategy (the PSI and the *Ordinovisti* having been sufficiently discredited), is never overtly or explicitly defended.

Williams apparently links his study of the *Biennio Rosso* to a number of recent attempts (centered mainly in England) to reassess and "rehabilitate" the Neapolitan founder of the Italian Communist Party. Though Williams' treatment is more balanced and less uncritical than some of the others, his standpoint is essentially the same: that the "cult of Gramsci" in PCI historiography has grossly distorted the historical stature of both Gramsci and Bordiga, in favor of the Sardinian. This is true enough, and Williams meticulously explores the *Biennio Rosso* period and the failure of the councils as the springboard for his re-evaluation. Yet it is necessary to distinguish between "political role" and "theoretical legacy." Bordiga's catalytic leadership and initiative were indispensable to the formation of a cohesive PCI at a moment of debilitating crisis within the Italian left (a time, incidentally, when Gramsci was too demoralized to function politically), and for this he deserves greater recognition than he has usually received. But what is the theoretical contribution that Williams finds so praiseworthy in Bordiga? His was a "scientific" Marxism that established clear theoretical and political boundaries, that created the basis of a total break with bourgeois institutions—a break actualized concretely through the intervention of the vanguard party—in contrast to Gramsci's diffuse, "open" Marxism that has been subsequently absorbed into bourgeois culture. This is highly problematic in at least two respects. The first is that the presumed assimilation of Gramsci by the bourgeois apparatus seems to be based upon a reading of the contemporary PCI, which has fetishized and misappropriated Gramscian theory to justify its post-World War II moderate, electoralist strategy, and sharply conflicts with the *historical* Gramsci and indeed with Williams' own post-1920 interpretation of him as "Leninist." The second is that Williams' reclamation of the Bordighist model, with its narrow instrumentalist (and abstentionist) politics, its mechanical conception of the revolutionary process, and its suspicion of local popular struggles, constitutes a strategic retreat which today can serve only to obfuscate the immensely complex ideological-cultural struggles and the new modes of political opposition that leftists in the advanced capitalist societies are only beginning to understand.

*Carl Boggs*

39. See Sergio Bologna, "Class Composition and the Theory of the Party at the Origin of the Workers-Council Movement," *Telos*, 13 (Fall 1972), pp. 3-27.

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Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci et l'Etat: Pour une Theorie Matérialiste de la Philosophie*. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1975.

The publication of Buci-Glucksmann's *Gramsci et l'Etat* coincided with the long awaited appearance of the definitive Einaudi edition of Gramsci's *Quaderni del Carcere* (Prison Notebooks).[1] As Gerratana notes in his short preface to the *Quaderni del Carcere*, Buci-Glucksmann provided modest assistance in the preparation of this critical edition.[2] (Buci-Glucksmann explains in the introduction to her work that she was unable to consult the new Einaudi edition prior to its publication.) Thus, at the outset, there is some reason to believe that a work of this length and seriousness would hold forth the promise of being a major contribution to the study and advancement of Gramsci's thought.

But readers familiar with recent French Marxism[3] may be forewarned by the subtitle—*Pour une Théorie Materialiste de la Philosophie*—that all may not be what it seems. By page 25, students of Gramsci may be wondering if a better title for the book might not have been *Lénine et Gramsci*.

Buci-Glucksmann's purpose in *Gramsci et l'Etat* is to reconstitute Marxism-Leninism and to place Gramsci safely inside the old walls of orthodoxy. Of course, this is hardly the first attempt. Buci-Glucksmann herself pays homage to Togliatti, who tried to do the very same thing (p. 385). The novelty of this most recent effort is that the guiding inspiration of the project is not Stalin but Althusser.

One of Buci-Glucksmann's main theoretical concerns is the delineation of the similarities and discordances in the work of Althusser and Gramsci.[4] She refers to her book as a "lecture symptomale double" (p. 28) on Althusser and Gramsci. Althusser's recent *Eléments d'Autocritique* (translated as *Self-Criticism*, London, 1976) is held up as a point of departure for new theoretical work on Gramsci. Her approach to Althusser and Gramsci is one that rejects what she refers to as a "defensive position" (p. 85). A "defensive position" is defined as any approach which supports Gramsci's "historicism," "humanism," and "philosophy" and avoids the problems that Althusser has raised regarding these concepts. The other side of what Buci-Glucksmann regards as Althusser's ambivalent relation to Gramsci is his positive evaluation of Gramsci's ideas relating to organic intellectuals, the concept of hegemony and his approach to the question of the State (p. 26). "From Althusser to Gramsci—and reciprocally—it perhaps becomes possible today to establish a positive new rapport which rejects any defensive position and states its objectives clearly: 1. The thesis of Althusser on the Ideological State Apparatus, his critique of economism, his theory of philosophy as a moment of the superstructure authorizes a certain theoretical-political reading of Gramsci which brings to light certain aspects of his work which have been underestimated or simply repressed. I say it with emphasis: these theses and these alone; 2. Inversely, the recovery of the authentically Leninist materialist nerve of Gramsci refracted through certain analyses of Althusser. Some Gramscian concepts are rejected

1. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del Carcere*, Edizione critica dell'Instituto Gramsci, edited by Valentino Gerratana (Einaudi, 1975).

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, "Prefazione" by Valentino Gerratana, p. xlii.

3. For a discussion of Gramsci's relation to French Marxism and further comments on *Gramsci et l'etat*, see Yves Benot, "Gramsci en France," *La Pensée*, 184 (November-December, 1975), pp. 3-24.

4. Some other comments on Althusser and Gramsci can be found in Franco Fergnani, "La 'Questione Gramsci'; una Proposta di Riconsiderazione," *Aut Aut*, 144 (November-December, 1974), pp. 3-38.

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(his interpretation of historicism, for example) and others recast or enriched (the State, ideology, philosophy)" (pp. 85-86).

Buci-Glucksmann seeks to bury the "idealist" interpretations of Gramsci and to develop in their place the revolutionary (i.e., Leninist) dimension of his thought. One of the first erroneous impressions that she seeks to dispel is the idea that there is anything original about Gramsci's concept of hegemony. In her view the concept is perfectly compatible with the Marxism of the Third International. "One finds it often under the pen of Lenin before 1917, but also after. One also finds it often in Bela Kun, Varga, Stalin and especially Bukharin..." (p. 19).

As Piccone has noted elsewhere, Gramsci's concept of hegemony and Lenin's use of the term are worlds apart. In Lenin, hegemony refers to class domination by the Party in its effort to maintain the collective ownership of the means of production, while in Gramsci it is also a cultural theory which includes the overcoming of alienation.[5] In his recent book, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London, 1976), Perry Anderson has pointed out that the term hegemony originated in the Russian socialist movement and was first employed by Plekhanov and Axelrod. But, "Gramsci's adoption of the term in effect transformed it into something like a new concept altogether in Marxist discourse designed precisely to theorize the political structures of capitalist power that did not exist in Tsarist Russia" (p. 79).

In Buci-Glucksmann's account, the origins of Gramsci's concept of hegemony can be traced to the "decisive importance" (p. 219) of his journey to the USSR, from May, 1922 to December, 1923, and his stay in Vienna from December, 1923 to May, 1924. Gramsci's travels enabled him to establish his political and theoretical links with the Third International, according to Buci-Glucksmann. In fact, as Piccone has emphasized in his review of Macciocchi's *Per Gramsci*, Gramsci's stay in the Soviet Union did not provide him with much time for theorizing (one reason being that he didn't know Russian).[6]

But then why bother with disputing such a thesis? If one accepts Buci-Glucksmann's Leninization of Gramsci, it is immaterial how or when he developed his theory of hegemony. Buci-Glucksmann's Gramsci could not have come up with any ideas which were fundamentally at odds with the positions of the Third International. What we have left after Buci-Glucksmann is finished is a Gramsci whose creative mind has been embalmed in the old cask of dogmatism. The entire corpus of Gramsci's work is tossed into the Leninist bonfire. For example: "The *Prison Notebooks* are to be 'read' as a continuation of Leninism, in other historical conditions, with other political conclusions. This implies that any tentative gestures of opposing Gramsci to Lenin in a sort of overstepping to the left for the one, to the right for the others, any reading which occludes (*occulte*) the theoretical and historical originality of Leninism can only, in our opinion, lead to a new form of idealism" (p. 24).

Buci-Glucksmann goes on to add what she considers an important qualification to her version of a "productive and creative" Leninism: "One word for another: an essential nuance which implies that the only 'orthodoxy' can be the revolution" (p. 25). One word for another: "the only 'orthodoxy' can be the revolution" is the standard disclaimer attached to any paean to Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy.

Within the Leninist text Buci-Glucksmann does extend to Gramsci the freedom of what amounts to one long footnote: Gramsci did think the question of the State in

5. Cf. Paul Piccone, "Gramsci's Marxism: Beyond Lenin and Togliatti," *Theory and Society*, 3:4 (Winter 1976).

6. Paul Piccone, *Telos*, 22 (Winter, 1974-75), pp. 171-174.

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relatively new terms which corresponded to the problems raised by the victory of fascism and the strength of the superstructure in Western capitalist societies. She holds that while Gramsci's thinking on the State is essentially an enlargement of the Leninist model it also poses new questions of strategy (the cultural revolution) and offers a new dimension to the problem of the withering away of the State in Communist society (pp. 25-26, 119-120, 396). (In this context, Buci-Glucksmann also attempts to develop a materialist philosophy—"une théorie de l'appareil d'hegemonie philosophique et une gnoseologie de la politique"—which actually owes more to Althusser than to Gramsci.)

While restoring the original "problematic" of the Third International, Buci-Glucksmann not only buries Gramsci in the Leninist mausoleum but she also removes his name from his writings and adds a more familiar and acceptable one in its place: Bukharin. "For Gramsci does not start from Croce, he comes to him *little by little*. On the other hand, he starts from Bukharin, as early as the end of 1930. Why? He had several precise reasons for this, which have been ignored by numerous commentators. Had not Bukharin developed from 1924-26 a theory of hegemony in its relations to the *social bloc* on which a similar hegemony is practiced, and the relationship of the theory of hegemony to the State? This liaison between *hegemony, bloc* of social forces (the famous Gramscian *historical bloc*) and State, is this not also the essential element of the Gramscian response to the aporia of superstructures, the essential element of his response in order to think the 'revolution in the West'? Then, what separates Gramsci from Bukharin?" (p. 299). The response to Buci-Glucksmann's question is necessarily abrupt: the same thing that separates him from Lenin!

Perhaps it would also be useful to recall some of what Gramsci had to say regarding Bukharin's *Theory of Historical Materialism: A Popular Manual of Marxist Sociology*: "He does not succeed in elaborating the concept of philosophy of praxis as 'historical methodology,' and of that in turn as 'philosophy,' as the only concrete philosophy. That is to say he does not succeed in posing and resolving, from the point of view of the real dialectic, the problem which Croce has posed and has attempted to resolve from the speculative point of view. Instead of a historical methodology, of a philosophy, he constructs a casebook of particular questions which he envisages and resolves in a dogmatic fashion, and sometimes purely verbally with paralogisms that are as pretentious as they are naive."[7]

The retrograde interpretation of Gramsci's ideas advanced in *Gramsci et l'Etat* has its origins in the present crisis of French Marxism. The distance which separates the scattered post-structuralist theories from a revolutionary praxis has resulted in the hasty flight of some intellectuals across the old bridges built by the Communists of another era (often taking the form of pilgrimages to China).[8] Christine Buci-Glucksmann may have unwittingly provided her readers with an opportunity to reflect on the crisis of French Communism, but *Gramsci et l'Etat* adds precious little to an understanding of Gramsci.

*Tom Good*

7. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York, 1971), p. 436.

8. Some interesting remarks on dogmatism and the French Left appear in the Editorial in *Tel Quel*, 61 (Spring 1975).

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Nicola Badaloni, *Il Marxismo di Gramsci*. Turin: Einaudi, 1975.*

It is not easy to condense into a few observations the richness of Badaloni's recent work. Its central theme is that of *genesis* in which the complementary notions of *transition* and *socialization* are rooted. Here Badaloni locates the live-wire which, in spite of disorder and internal divisions, runs throughout Italian Marxism. Since Labriola, there has been a tendency to separate the subjective moment from the objective necessity of the "laws of motion," and to deal with Marxism as the "theory of the historical space for the proletarian revolution" (p. 16). Labriola brought about a speculative overturning of the traditional (Jacobin) relation between theory and the working class, locating in the latter the bearer of socialism as the "new formation" which progressively tends to displace the old one. Thus, with Labriola, we have the first great attempt to translate the Marxian critique of political economy into a theory of transition. Such a translation is left at the stage of a first draft because of the "persistence of a kind of mechanism" (p. 51) which binds the growth of the new formation to the rhythms of development of the old one. In other words, Labriola does not complete the program of *appropriation* of the old civilization because he is unable to turn its problematic into the meaning of the new one. In spite of this limitation, Labriola attained some results basic for the theoretical construction of Marxism.

First of all, he demonstrated the morphological rather than chronological character of prediction in Marx, which does not prophesy an automatic collapse, but locates the structural aspect of the crisis and the impossibility of indefinitely deferring its resolution. Although Labriola did not develop a concept of imperialism, i.e., an understanding of a new form of regulated and controlled competition, he had a clear notion of the *historical validity* of the tendential laws of the mode of production. His polemic against Croce [1] and the revisionists of the Second International [2] was prefaced by this preliminary methodical warning: in order to refute Marxism, it is not sufficient to set against it an army of "facts." As Badaloni points out, it is necessary "to deny that the history of our century has been a progressive and increasing introduction in society of instruments of social direction of the economy, of production, etc., necessitated by the class struggle, i.e., not only by the working class, but also by its antagonist, in order to perpetuate the domination of its own formation" (p. 46). The expansion of "countertendential" interventions is an indirect confirmation of the fundamental "tendency" and, with it, of the historical character of the Marxian prediction (which does not mechanically exclude the "subjective intervention" of the masses but, rather, considers it as a fundamental component of the very objective process).[3]

Secondly, Labriola provided a concept of *formation* as the basis for the connection between theory and tactics. Croce and the revisionists magnified facts—and, although starting from objectively observed historical phenomena, did not insert them in the context of "sociological data" (showing that point of historical development where it is possible to distinguish the succession of social forms) and moves from empirical analysis to morphological prediction. Labriola's thought, on the other hand, rotates

*Originally published in *Aut-Aut*, 148 (July-August, 1975), pp. 68-76. English translation by Franca Bernabei.

1. See A. Labriola, *Lettere a Benedetto Croce, 1885-1904*, edited by the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici (Naples, 1975), pp. 265-266.

2. Cf. G. Procacci, "Antonio Labriola e la Revisione del Marxismo attraverso l'Epistolario con Bernstein e con Kautsky," in *Annali Feltrinelli*, vol. III (1960), pp. 264ff.

3. For this problematic see H. Grossmann, *Saggi sulla Teoria delle Crisi*, edited and introduced by G.M. Bonacchi (Bari, 1975).

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around the notion of the *form of production*, thus opening the way to a theory of the transition.

Polemicizing with revisionists and Marx's critics, Gramsci re-elaborated Labriola's concepts not in order to re-establish a sterile orthodoxy, but to solve the theoretical and political deadlocks of revisionism, beginning with its objective roots and its rational nucleus. Gramsci did not reject, but examines from within, the "rupture" of the dialectical unity brought about by the critics of Marxism (Bernstein, Croce, Sorel). The break of the link which Labriola, following Engels, presupposed between the "rhythm of things" (the objective historical process) and the development of "socialist consciousness," was justified by the tendencies of the capitalist economy and the emergence of the controlling functions connected with the domination of finance capital. Gramsci acknowledged the new situation which, instead of encouraging the automatic expansion of socialist consciousness, intensified the separation of the working class from the social totality. Only by departing from such a separation—the "rupture" pointed out by Sorel—is it possible to regain the unity of the doctrine. Gramsci's re-elaboration of Marxism, Badaloni remarks, is neither a philosophical nor a philological fact. It does not overlook "the rupture within Labriola's philosophy brought about by Sorel and Croce," but moves from this rupture because it "represents an objective process of social reality" (p. 130). The result, however, is the reversal of the relation between "logical" and "historical" with respect to Marx: the starting point is no longer the logical but the historical order. If the political program is to sew back together the fabric of unity beginning with the rupture, the theoretical program for the middle period is to reconstitute "Marxism, upset in its logical order by the phenomenology of reality, . . . at the level of the latter, i.e., of the historical order" (p. 59). While *from the viewpoint of logical order* the rise of capitalism implies—through the separation of the producers from the means of production—a break and a contradiction with communal organizations (and, therefore, the expansion of the separation and the slow erosion of pre-capitalist forms of existence), the question is different *from the viewpoint of historical order*. From this viewpoint, the perspective of the community is taken as predominant and "the enlargement of the break brought about by capitalism becomes an internal fact of its dissolution" (p. 72). By stressing Sorel's influence, Badaloni introduces the theme of the "bloc" in terms of the reconstitution of the logical order through history as the reintegration of the voluntarist element. Yet, while this reintegration in Sorel resulted in the perspective of the myth, in Gramsci it is articulated in a complex program of re-integration with the Marxian model and of the critical regaining of the unity of Marxism.

In order to carry out this program, it was necessary to reintroduce the key concept of *genesis* (which Labriola had tentatively outlined) by formulating it in terms adequate to the logical structure of Marx's theory. Thus, Gramsci singles out, in the *subjective side of the productive forces*, the objective element which allows him to push to the limit the reading of the historical order, faithfully re-treading (even if in the reverse direction) Marx's path. According to Badaloni, the notion of "absolute historicism" synthesizes Gramsci's view of reality as already charged with tensions, of a system of actions and reactions generated by the subjective side of the productive forces. This does not mean that Gramsci thus tacitly undertakes a revisionist operation: he does not contrapose historical facts against a theoretical model hypostasized on a meta-historical level, but restructures theory starting from the *new* and *specific* element produced by the irruption of the subjective side of the productive forces in the relations of production.

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If the confrontation with Croce's conception of the "ethical-political" allowed Gramsci to retranslate in an original way Lenin's "primacy of politics," his confrontation with Sorel allowed him to elaborate, in addition to the concept of the "historical bloc," that of a "new common sense," which he related to the "Marxian theme of the enrichment of faculties" (p. 67). Moreover, if Gramsci inherited Sorel's concepts of communal morality and self-control, he borrowed Croce's demand for recomposition as the regaining of the totality. The fusion of these two aspects leads the totality to coincide in a transitional epoch, with the *socialization of politics*, whose nucleus is constituted by the "collective intellectual." Such a formulation of the theme of the intellectuals marks Gramsci's break from Sorel, who had seen their function only in the negative sense of a cover-up of the rupture (and had, therefore, deluded himself that he could solve it by radicalizing the separateness and subaltern status of the working class). At the same time, however, it marks his break from Croce who, although facing the problem of recomposition, conceived the latter as the activity and task of the Spirit, i.e., of intellectuals as functionaries of the ruling classes.

Far from being merely "superstructural," the concept of the intellectual is connected with the previously outlined concept of the subjective side of the productive forces. Thus, Gramsci is not, as it is generally claimed, the "theoretician of the superstructure" but, rather (and this is the main thesis of Badaloni's book) the *theoretician of the productive forces*, who in his analysis privileges the "social figures closest to the structure." (At the origin of this statement lies the counterposition between *wage-earner*—characterized by the separateness and subaltern status of his position—and *producer*, who has consciousness of the totality, i.e., of himself as the active side of the productive forces—as well as for his ability to direct the historical process—p. 103). Given these premises, it follows for Badaloni that socialization does not take place through the state or political and juridical institutions, but through the productive forces themselves: "Gramsci has not arrested socialization at the state stage" (p. 182). Thus, the extinction of the state (and of the transition), far from resulting in a falling back into the private, is the full regaining of communal life (not by chance, he relates the concept of "public" not to the party and the trade union—which are private organizations—but to the councils, conceived as organs of the social direction of the productive forces). According to Badaloni, by pointing to the social dialectic of dissolution and recomposition (mediated by the growing shift of intellectuals towards the hegemonic area of the working class), Gramsci indicates the historical necessity of the "masses to learn the science of politics," but does not go so far as to "consider democracy as the global political locus of the historical transition" (p. 128). With Togliatti we have the complete recovery of democracy no longer as an instrument or a transitory vehicle, but as an indispensable element of socialism: the specific locus of growth of the workers' hegemony and, with it, of the masses' political and intellectual faculties. The preservation and strengthening of democracy is no longer the class adversary's exclusive ground, but the battleground to which he is forced and within whose boundaries there occurs "a complex process in which the social figures change their roles and in which, in the historical order, there comes into being, in forms not immediately recognizable, the changes foreseen in the dialectical articulation of Marx's logical order" (p. 129).

The main point lies in vindicating the *Marxist* character (rather than Leninist) of Gramsci's thought. He is seen as a theoretician of the productive forces and consequently a scientist of politics. Such an approach allows, first of all, the demystification of the legend of Gramsci as the "theoretician of the superstructure" (not to

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speak of Gramsci as the theoretician of the cultural revolution in the West, recently proposed with scanty political and intellectual seriousness, as a new fashionable item). Secondly, it throws light on the current debate concerning the question of the state and the transition, in terms of the more general problem of the relation of theory and strategy. The consequences of Badaloni's claims are that Gramsci's reading of the historical order, although grand and ingenious, still leaves room for a theoretical reconstitution of Marxism as a morphological re-reading of society. In respect to this line of work, the reproposal of genesis as a hermeneutic criterion and, consequently, of *historicism* (understood as the appearance of the new fundamental class) risks ending up as inadequate and to generate misunderstandings. In a seemingly paradoxical way, the very "genetic" criterion, instead of favoring, risks hampering the construction of that theory of history which is the unsuppressible condition of a theory of the transition. This is because the only possible starting point for a structural theory of history is the a-historical claim of capital, the fulfilled and "classical character of the process of production, which gives rise to a *new level of historicity*, in which the "laws" of events are correlated with the rhythm of development of the social formation. Here lies the connection between the theory of history and the theory of transition, in the historical present characterized by the relation of economy to politics, and of capital to the state. That is why, in order to meet this need postulated by Badaloni, to provide a firm theoretical foundation for *trans-forming* praxis, it would be necessary to start, instead of from the historical appearance of an irreducible quality (the "new fundamental class"), from the *morphological* conditions of such an emergence and from its "structural" effects on social formations.

To move, as Labriola does, from the *manner* (rather than from the *fact*) of genesis means, moreover, to face the problematic of "consciousness" as a dialectical thematic of the *constitution* of the proletariat into a "class for itself" and to scientifically ground the materialist need to place "politics in command."[4] If the substance of Gramsci's polemic with Croce lies, as Badaloni points out, in the claim that Marxism is able to overcome "its free-trade and economic-centered phase" (p. 159), this means that the problem of the state must be confronted by theory as the central theme of the transition phase. In this regard one might disagree with Badaloni that the state does not resolve itself either *entirely* or *immediately* into its "economic and social matrices,"[5] i.e., it cannot be set in the straits of the function of "ownership" by one of the "two fundamental classes" (in the same way as the class struggle cannot be resolved or simplified into the sociological conflictuality of capitalists and workers). It survives even after the bourgeoisie has died out as a traditional class: for the existence and function of the state the relation to a "class" is not as indispensable as the link with capital and its reproduction process.[6] At this point a disjunction has to be pointed out

4. In this regard, cf. Cesare Luporini's introduction to *Dialettica e materialismo* (Rome, 1974), from which the following considerations have been derived.

5. Cf. Nicola Badaloni, "Le Matrici Economiche e Sociali del Politico," *Rinascita—Il Contemporaneo*, 32:30 (July 25, 1975), pp. 20-22.

6. If one looks into the question carefully, it is exactly such a reductive view of the theme of the state that leads Badaloni to overemphasize Sorel's influence and to dismiss Gentile's uncomfortable presence. "Stressing the importance of philosophy within Marxism," Badaloni writes, "Gentile was not praising Labriola, but was trying to leave no way open to socialism" (p. 84). The point is, however, whether Gentile's ideology was not, *from the viewpoint of organicity*, at a stage of development of capitalist domination, more effective than Croce's, better able to weld together the intellectual and the state, confining Croce's influence on the intellectual class to a subaltern role. Symmetrically, Badaloni tends to over-emphasize the "influence" of Sorel's mental *outillage* on Gramsci, by stating that the logical armor of common sense would imply a stressing of the impli-

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in Badaloni between the theme of the productive forces and that of genesis. It can be found in the failure to probe into the *form of the contradiction* (i.e., the *way* in which the productive forces intertwine with the relations of production in a contradictory unity which has different configurations according to different historical phases). To use Gramci's terminology: "disintegration" and "historical bloc" are not the limits of the process of transition, but constitute the extreme poles of a dialectical constellation inside of which the *field of objectivity of politics* is recovered. Now, the recovery of materiality and objectivity in politics presupposes that the context is *really dialectical.* To be dialectical, however, the contradictory "totality" needs an *actual mediation*: this mediation is provided by the moment of the "organic crisis," i.e., by the characterization of the capitalist system as the "totality in crisis" (*Krisenzusammenhang*). If the moment of the mediation is not called into play, one must necessarily, as with Badaloni, displace the sphere in which revolutionary subjectivity is founded from the analysis of the organic contradictions produced in the "totality in crisis" to the mere observation of the movement of self-development and self-growth of the "new formation": with the risk of a "neo-historicist" levelling and the destructuration not only of the concept "formation," but of the very notion of subjectivity.

The link between theory and tactics can be realized only by passing through the *actual objectivity* of the contradiction, *never outside of it*, since there is no model available that can avoid the objective necessity of the *immanent resolution* of the "totality in crisis."

Although the theoretical work to be done is still immense, the first foundations of this program of the "morphological reconstruction" of Marxism have been laid. In fact, the suggestion of a correct formulation of the problem is provided by Badaloni himself when, commenting on Labriola's effort to define the relation between praxis and knowledge, tactics and theory, he writes: "The proletariat cannot be placed in an indeterminate historical time, but in that particular historical time which is dominated by the crisis of the bourgeois social formation" (p. 13). Isn't it exactly in this theoretical warning—where Labriola saw the historical origin of Marxism in the "historical and worldwide" development of humanity—that the necessity is rooted, *for us today*, to analyze the relation between state and crisis with the purpose of scientifically founding the proper ground of politics?

Consequently, the Gramscian theme of the "collective intellectual" and his historical role during the phase of transition, should be re-examined in relation to the "conception of the state according to the productivity of social classes." Following Gramsci along this path, it is possible to seek in the roots of our conception, i.e., in Marx himself, the nucleus of a scientific theory of politics connected with that need for a unitary recomposition of Marxism which Badaloni has advocated. He has proposed a fertile critique of "revisionism," not aimed at banishing it as a mere ideological

cations of the Marxian overturning of compulsory cooperation into free cooperation, in the sense of an "enrichment of the faculties" (p. 67). But Badaloni himself must then warn that, since in Marx's view the human faculties can be *historically* enriched, the "new common sense" is not, in Gramsci, a primordial voluntaristic element or a natural-behavioristic datum. But if the positive evaluation of the voluntarist element is not *causa sui* (i.e., an irreducible *quid*, as in Sorel's anarchic trade-unionism), but is "rendered indispensable by the function of social direction which the 'producers' are called upon to assume" (p. 68)—so as to prevent the dissolution of capitalist society from turning into a catastrophe—isn't one urgently confronted, then, with the problem of going deeper, at the present level of the development and *crisis* of capitalist social formation, into the relation of state and capital, institution and class struggle, i.e., in practice, the theme of *politics today* and its relation to theory?

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falsehood, but rather at recovering its specific levels of reality: i.e., its "rational core." This is quite remarkable and full of implications today, if one still believes that the space and function of theory must be neither that of a legitimizing ideology nor that of a justificatory screen of existing political practice.

*Giacomo Marramao*

Tito Perlini, *Gramsci e il Gramscismo*. Milan: Celuc, 1974.

Gianfranco Albertelli, ed., *Interpretazioni di Gramsci (1957-1975): La Problematica del Marxismo*. Trento: Materiali del Gruppo di Lavoro "Fenomeni Politici," 1976.

Perlini and the majority of the contributors to the Albertelli anthology are concerned with unmasking the wide variety of myths surrounding Gramsci's life and thought. In the age of East-West "cybernated imperialism," Gramsci's imprint on a communist party which, for all its dubious ideological and political oscillations, counts today among Europe's most vital forces, renders this demythification imperative. Above all, his intellectual and active symbiosis with the PCI offers Western Marxism a fresh opportunity to reassess its critical guidelines in light of concrete events and in the interest of genuine social transformation.

At the same time, insofar as the utter ossification of "orthodox" theory and practice, together with a Chinese model gone pitifully flat, reinforce the PCI's impetus, the latter's theoretical underpinnings require constant, critical and constructive reappraisal. This is not to belittle the *qualitatively* revolutionary and rejuvenating approach so far adopted by the PCI in national and international politics; however, the PCI's present position of strength does not render it immune from the dangers of facile appeals to the "real" Gramsci to legitimate its policies. Consequently, it becomes necessary to go back to Gramsci's thought and evaluate its relevance in a spirit properly his own.

The process of debunking alleged myths about Gramsci requires intellectual honesty toward the object under investigation and vigilance against "well-intentioned" efforts which may end up merely replacing the old myth with a new one. Perlini's *Gramsci e il Gramscismo* fails on both counts. In the name of a "Marxism" that he never defines as anything more than self-evidently "true" and "revolutionary," Perlini reduces Gramsci's stature to a non-entity—albeit a well-meaning and ardently revolutionary one. At the same time, Gramsci's practically impotent mind is accused of being the main perpetrator of the greatest sins against Perlini's brand of Marxism, by having contributed, among other things, to: a) the demise of the workers' councils movements (which were already dead and buried—pp. 25-27); b) the occlusion of a presumably bursting potential for Italy's participation in some mythical post-World War I international proletarian revolution (pp. 22-27); and c) the Stalinist involition and its strangulation of allegedly healthy, fervently revolutionary and genuinely mass-based "socialist" movements in Eastern Europe (pp. 37-39, 49-52)! Last but not least, Gramsci is the man to condemn not only for PCI "reformism" (an un-Marxian eternal and evil category to be rejected at all costs) but especially for the party's

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irreversible abandonment of "Marxism" when, *in spite of* the Cominform, of fascism and of its own internal divisions, it chose to fight fascism instead of launching the zealously-awaited international revolution (pp. 55ff; 159-160)!

What, if any, is the essence of Perlini's Marxism against which Gramsci ends up as a "politically and theoretically poorly defined figure, not free from ambivalent aspects and in his thought rather eclectic with a tendency to furnish an impoverished version of Marxism, in many ways distorted and oriented toward an idealistic-historicist sense" (p. 9)? To get to the answer, the reader must suffer through relentless accounts of intra-PCI-Gramsci history which, though admittedly useful and certainly instrumental in exploding the party-built Gramsci myths, constantly totter between Perlini's all too clear admiration for Trotsky and his ultimate rejection of PCI-influenced Italian Trotskyists (Merli, Maitan, Corvisieri), in the midst of which Gramsci emerges as scarcely anything more than a petty party politico. Apart from long narratives on party politics, fending and tactics and some meager allusions to the southern question, Perlini manages to sloganeer his way out of Gramsci's writings without a single direct reference to his voluminous output. When we finally get to learn why Gramsci's Marxism is so theoretically unpalatable and unsalvageably idealistic, it all boils down to Riechers', Marramao's, Schmidt's and Tronti's saying so in their "excellent" books and articles (pp. 99-104; 157-158 and *passim*). Thus, in addition to his philo-Trotskyism, the key to Perlini's reading of Gramsci lies in his entirely uncritical adoption of some of the most flagrantly distorting Gramsci interpretations known in recent years.[1] Apparently, Perlini judges Marramao's "contributions" sufficiently unchallengeable for concluding the book by listing them axiomatically (pp. 193-194), notwithstanding the fact that Marramao himself has abandoned such a dubious position.[2] But in this at least, he remains consistent with his generally cursory allusions to all Gramsci commentators with the exception of the Trotskyists. (The last chapter of the book is a masterpiece of name-dropping and one-line dismissals.)

The Gramsci that Perlini depicts suffers from terminal subjective idealism, brought about by excessive preoccupation and unnecessary brooding over the ripeness of objective conditions for a revolution, especially with respect to Southern Italy. Perlini argues that Gramsci's reformism, nurtured during the 1923-26 period, led him away from Lenin's revolutionary ideals to an increasingly narrow objectivistic estimate of revolutionary potential and to the adoption of the "revolution without a revolution" attitude, which, it is claimed, rejected the "qualitative leap" into revolution (pp. 58-59). In equally mechanistic fashion, Perlini concludes that Gramsci's "evolutionism" and apologetic "historicism" paved his actual acceptance of Stalinist theory and practice despite the fact that, as Perlini admits, he was constantly at odds with Togliatti over internal party democracy and the PCI's rapport with the masses

1. Christian Riechers, *Antonio Gramsci: Marxismus in Italien* (Frankfurt, 1970); Giacomo Marramao, "Per una Critica dell'Ideologia di Gramsci," reprinted from *Quaderni Piacentini* in Albertelli, pp. 277-95; Mario Tronti, "Alcune Questioni Intorno al Marxismo di Gramsci," reprinted from *Studi Gramsciani* (1959) in Albertelli, pp. 39-53. Alfred Schmidt, *Geschichte und Struktur* (Frankfurt, 1971). Among the multiplying negative critiques, cf. Paul Piccone, "Gramsci's Marxism: Beyond Lenin and Togliatti," *Theory and Society*, vol. 3:4 (Winter 1976), pp. 485-512. For shorter reviews, cf. Ray Morrow's in *Telos*, 22 (Winter 1974-75), pp. 174-81; Franco Fergnani, "La Questione Gramsci: Una Proposta di Riconsiderazione," reprinted from *Aut Aut*, 144, in Albertelli, pp. 327-65, and P. Palla, "Gramsci in Germania," *Utopia*, II:7—8, also reprinted in Albertelli, pp. 299-311.

2. Cf. Giacomo Marramao, "Ideologia e Rapporti Sociali," in *Rinascita*, July 25, 1975, pp. 23-25.

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and, also, regardless of his repeatedly vitiated attempts to warn against or stop Stalinist involutionism (pp. 39-58). In this connection, after a couple of laudatory comments about Gramsci's *intentions* in the 1926 letter to the CPSU protesting its bolshevization, Perlini dismisses it for being "too late" because, unlike Korsch, Gramsci had not understood what was happening after Lenin's death and, besides, he was not really questioning Stalin's tactics—he was just pressing for less rigidity (pp. 138-142). Of course, Perlini manages to furnish some (minimal) justification for Gramsci's "equivocal politics" in a set of circumstances that, by anybody else's standards, were nothing short of extraordinary: namely, while already incarcerated by that time, Gramsci was also fighting fascism through a party whose internal rifts threatened it with extinction in the face of fascist persecution (p. 143).

But none of this will really do for Perlini—not even the fact that, by his own admission, the *Quaderni* of this period provide indubitable proof of Gramsci's anti-Stalinism. Aside from assuming, like many others, that Gramsci was far more familiar with the USSR than he really was, with respect to the PCI's antifascist policy Perlini displays gross insensitivity which, coupled with infantile hindsight, leads him to argue that Gramsci and the PCI *should* have foreseen that fascism was just a transitory phase of capitalism and therefore hardly worth bothering with. The reasons behind Perlini's high-handed reductionism are not all that difficult to gather: he accuses Gramsci of objectivism as readily as he charges him with idealistic subjectivism because at no point is Perlini concerned with the survival of the PCI or—on a broader philosophical plane—with the building of a conduit toward a viable and genuinely, i.e., qualitatively, revolutionary new order. All he is interested in is revolution for its own sake, that is, the typical orthodox economistic recipe whose mere substitution of the rulers coincides with objectivism of the worst mechanistic order. In a similar vein, in discussing the Southern Question Perlini professes that, instead of grasping the South's backwardness as inherent to Italian capitalist development, Gramsci identified the lack of industrialization with the features of pre-capitalist economic formation; consequently, he turned his back to its (presumably high) revolutionary potential and, taking refuge into his "idealistic" ruminations on the hegemony of the peasants-intellectuals coalition, he deprived the PCI of a historic opportunity to stand up to its revolutionary mission (pp. 86-99). Now, though it is true that Gramsci occupied himself little with strict questions of political economy, the reason he did so lay precisely in his belief that, in the concrete—i.e., historical—Italian context, "structure" could no longer constitute the locus for the elaboration of revolutionary theory and action.

But we cannot really expect much more from Perlini, who has hopelessly missed the whole thrust of Gramsci's entire lifework. In essence, the latter involves the elaboration of an historically relevant, *alternative* revolutionary route, to counter the exact problem that Perlini accuses him of ignoring: namely, the complexity of late capitalism's structure-superstructure interrelation, which has grown so pervasive as to actually minimize the potential for revolutionary consciousness and action and has, therefore, rendered objectivistic ascriptions of revolutionary consciousness patently false (cf. pp. 55, 147-150). Perlini's one and only attemt to prove Gramsci a Crocean "crypto-idealist" through his concept of 'catharsis' and its relationship to the 'historical bloc' ends up in a laughable textual mess in which Riechers appears to be conveniently (and justifiably) instrumental.

In the section on neo-Gramscism, the propagation of "false consciousness" is, Perlini claims, a direct result of the unwillingness to deal with the structures and mechanisms

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of late capitalist society. For Perlini, the theoretical distortion from which this attitude is derived has to do, first, with Gramsci's "very non-Marxian" identification of civil society with the superstructure and second, with forcing the meaning of the 'war of position' to coincide with the building of (a new) civil society (pp. 146-147). Perlini's viewpoint joins the long and miserable tradition of deterministic, a-historical, so-called Marxists who, by freezing Marx's thought into unsurpassable canons, measure the validity of any Marxist theoretical endeavor in proportion to its willingness to remasticate this "true faith." To argue that Gramsci's thought is non-Marxian because he uses or elaborates on *terms* which Marx did not, is as intellectually convincing as to reiterate that he is an idealist because Riechers *et al.* think so. Perlini's discussion of 'catharsis' provides a perfect illustration of this obscurantist attitude for, completely oblivious to Gramsci's prescient warning that "identity of terms does not mean identity of concepts,"[3] Perlini designates 'catharsis' as the damnable cornerstone of the Gramscian idealist edifice.

What exactly does Gramsci mean by the cathartic moment? In effect, aside from a difference in terms, *Gramsci is simply rewording Marx's conception of the passage from the realm of necessity to that of freedom.* According to Marx, "The realm of freedom only begins, in fact, where that labour which is determined by need and external purposes ceases; it is therefore, by its very nature, outside the sphere of material production proper... With [civilized man's] development the realm of natural necessity expands, because his wants increase; but at the same time the forces of production, by which these wants are satisfied, also increase. Freedom in this field cannot consist of anything else but the fact that socialized mankind, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with Nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power and accomplish their task with the least expenditure of energy and under such conditions as are proper and worthy for human beings."[4]

In other words, for Marx, this is the moment when men *rationally* reverse the course of past history by their own praxis, i.e., through their consciously thought-out and socially unified activity, in order to establish a new type of (civil) society where conscious regulation of things social and political (superstructure) ceases to be prey of materiality (mode of production).

Similarly, in Gramsci's terms, "The term 'catharsis' can be employed to indicate the passage from the purely economic (or egoistic-passional) to the ethico-political moment, that is, the superior elaboration of the structure into superstructure in the minds of men. This also means the passage from 'objective to subjective' and from 'necessity to freedom.' Structure ceases to be an external force which crushes man, assimilates him to itself and makes him passive; and is transformed into a means of freedom, an instrument to create a new ethico-political form and a source of new initiatives. To establish the 'cathartic' moment becomes therefore, it seems to me, the starting-point for all the philosophy of praxis, and the cathartic process coincides with the chain of syntheses which have resulted from the evolution of the dialectic."[5] And, just in case the objective-subjective constitution of this moment remained unclear or was thought to depart from Marx's formulation in the *Contribution to the Critique of*

3. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York, 1975), p. 456. Translation from *Il Materialismo storico e la Filosofia di B. Croce* (Turin, 1966), p. 151.

4. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, V A III-2, pp. 873-4. Quoted by T.B. Bottomore and M. Rubel, eds., *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* (London, 1971), pp. 259-60.

5. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, pp. 366-7. *Materialismo Storico, op.cit.*, p. 40.

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*Political Economy*, Gramsci adds a further explanatory note: "one must keep permanently in mind the two points between which this process oscillates: that no society poses for itself problems the necessary and sufficient conditions for whose solution do not already exist or are coming into being; and that no society comes to an end before it has expressed all its potential content."

What is Perlini's reaction to all this? Maliciously dragging in Bobbio's general comments to his support, he asserts that the notion of superstructure is overprivileged in Gramsci's thought; that while for Marx civil society coincides with the economic structure, for Gramsci, it is part of the superstructure; that, at the same time, Gramsci places civil society also between the State (as force) and the economic structure: "Therefore, civil society takes the shape of an *ethical moment*, which by emerging from the economic sphere and by emancipating itself from the determinism inherent to it, is counterposed (very Croceanly) to the *political moment* which constitutes for Gramsci the presence of the material element in the superstructural sphere. In Gramsci the *ethical moment*, in its opposition to the *political moment* which sanctions the triumph of force, represents a *cathartic type transfiguration* of the *economic moment*. In Gramsci, Marxist materialism tends to become purified and disembodied to the point of dissolving itself in an exquisitely idealistic (and, at certain times, absolutely spiritualistic) vision" (p. 156).

Unfortunately, Perlini is not the only one to be having spiritualist visions; he makes sure that Riechers is also brought in to seal Gramsci's "crypto-idealist" fate by calling his ideas "non-Marxian," "pre-Hegelian," "Kantian," "monistic-activistic," etc. (p. 157). And that's that. The book closes with the recurrent theme on the (lost) greatness of revolutionism—especially Bordiga's—the reiteration of eulogies for the early Marramao, Schmidt and Riechers (whose confutation by Palla is found "unconvincing"), and a messy, polemical, bibliographical marathon.

At first sight, the number of footnotes trailing the 29 articles of the Albertelli volume suggest a presence of ideas and a density of themes to be explored in the collection.[6] Yet, there is surprisingly little variety of topics and great overlap, even when considering dissenting viewpoints. This is partly due to the fact that about two-thirds of the essays date back to the late 1950s to mid-1950s when the Gerratana edition of the *Notebooks* was still unavailable. But the real drawback lies in an overall smoothness of style which, by virtue of its generality and marked reverence toward Gramsci, seldom manages to tackle the issues rigorously.

Leaving Togliatti's panegyric 1957 entry aside, we might try to categorize the problematic of these interpretations from the most general possible viewpoint. Schmidt and Marramao are easily disposed of, thanks to Palla's article which also takes care of Riechers. Working on the specific quotations distorted in Riechers' translation—later adopted by Schmidt and Marramao—Palla refutes all ontological claims and, instead, ties Gramsci's immanentism and his subjective historicity to Hegelian gnoseology (pp. 299-308). In this context, says Palla, Gramsci's approach to ideology defies metaphysical reductionism by treating ideologies as the product of the dialectical unity between theory and practice. Therefore, rather than reducing reality to appearances as Riechers claims, Gramsci includes appearances (ideologies) in the historical process for the simple reason that they are "operative" in determining concrete human behavior (pp. 308-310).

6. For reasons of space—except in cases of special interest—titles will be omitted since most essays are reprints or excerpts from longer works often bearing different headings.

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In "On the Gramsci Question," Fergnani finds Gramsci's use of 'ideology' much too loose by comparison to Marx's. While he clearly rejects the Riechers and Schmidt interpretations and stresses the absurdity of dismissing ideologies in the mechanistic vulgar-Marxist fashion, he does not seem convinced that Gramsci's concept of praxis is broad enough to accommodate the creation and elaboration of ideas. Gramsci limits praxis to a technico-operative sense which brings him close to Engels' identification of praxis with industry and labor (p. 355). Fergnani, without citing his source, seems to have misread a passage where Gramsci opposes Croce's concept of history to that of Engels in order to establish the theoretical background to the philosophy of praxis: Gramsci says: "for Engels 'history is practice (experiment, industry), for Croce 'history' is still a speculative concept."[7] The translation of practice as praxis is untenable: at the very least, praxis implies a dialectical nexus between practice *and* theory, productive activity *and* theoretical contemplation, objectivity *and* subjectivity—to use some of the key aspects brought out in Kosik's exposition of praxis (pp. 209-214).

In the last analysis, it is probably unfair to dwell upon Fergnani's parenthetical remarks, since he must be aware that they are inconsistent with the rest of the issues he has singled out for favorable appraisal. This becomes obvious in his exegesis of Gramsci's quantity-quality dialectic, which Fergnani connects to that of structure-superstructure and to the material forces-ideology (cathartic) relationship to support Gramsci's anti-Engels and anti-economistic standpoint (pp. 342-347). In this connection, Fergnani's strongest objection to the 'superstructural' approach against vulgar Marxism focuses upon Gramsci's negligence toward the problematic of alienation and reification—an issue also mentioned by others with various degrees of concern. The main difficulty, according to Fergnani, is that no philosophical connection can be established between Gramsci's thought and that of other 1920s critical theoreticians like Lukács, Korsch, or even Weber (pp. 336-337).

This objection could be conceived as a problem but not in the terms suggested by Fergnani, which seem merely scholastic—a matter of a missed philological opportunity. After all, he does stress that there is a definite parallel and a theoretical proximity between Gramsci's and Lukács' subject-object and theory-praxis dialectic. The truth remains, however, that this 'charge' should apply much more to Lenin than to Gramsci. For, as Piccone's discussion fully illustrates, though they were both unfamiliar with Marx's formulations of this problem in the *Manuscripts* and the *Grundrisse*, we cannot find in Lenin anything equivalent to Gramsci's trenchant analysis of the effects of Taylorism upon man and his praxis.[8] Moreover, Gramsci's assessment of the effect of the *structure* in his (by now, belabored) definition of the 'cathartic' moment shows a keen philosophical sensitivity to the concrete dimensions of praxis and political action: structure *is* the Weberian 'magical matter,' it is the "external force which crushes man, assimilates him to itself and makes him passive."[9] Last but not least, as Fergnani himself stresses in detail, Gramsci's entire critique of objectivism and science pivots on a historically fetishized definition of objectivity which has excluded man's concrete needs from the acceptable goals of scientific inquiry (pp. 350-352).

The same issue provides fertile ground for Paci's phenomenological Marxist analysis. Excerpted from *The Function of the Sciences and the Meaning of Man,*

7. *Materialismo Storico, op.cit.*, p. 233.
8. Piccone, *op.cit.*, pp. 499-501.
9. *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 367. Sartre's *Critique de la raison dialectique* offers the finest theoretical development of parallel concepts—*extériorité, matière, ensorcelée*—carried to their full limits in the conception of a practico-inert daily human reality.

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Paci's essay links Gramsci's conception of history to that of science through a *telos* that they both share, i.e., to the extent that they both originate from intentional human praxis. Undoubtedly, Gramsci's declaration ("objective always means 'humanly objective' which can be held to correspond exactly to 'historically subjective': in other words, objective would mean 'universal subjective' ") constitutes one of the most articulate formulations of phenomenological Marxism's fundamental thesis.

As expected, Gramsci's historicized concept of praxis readily becomes the object of Althusser's scientistic attack (excerpted from *Lire "le Capital"*), which also furnishes the guidelines for essays by Tronti, Papi and Agazzi. Badaloni (pp. 163-187) makes a good effort to save Gramsci from Althusser's phobia of anything or anyone who might rob his Marxism of its 'scientific' character but, in the end, this is both unnecessary and futile: Sartre spent years of his life arguing against him and others that, unless *praxis* itself is dialectical, it makes no sense to speak of a dialectical *history*. (A position on which even Rossanda might agree if only she could forget that she has made up her mind to hate Sartre *in aeternum*; pp. 153-162).

Nardone's "The Unity between Theory and Praxis" assumes a similar position on the relation between praxis and history by suggesting that for Grasmci, the latter is only an intensified form of political existence. Liberty, he says, has the same form as the political event "so that it is impossible to attribute to human will a dynamic which would be different from that of history and to find in the former a logic which does not at the same time belong to the latter" (p. 254). In this context, the question of what ought to be (*dover essere*) in the future is not utopian but a problem and a possibility contained in present praxis. History, when conceived as a movement, necessarily implies an 'ought' as a function of its verifiability and realization through political action (p. 254). Vajda's "Gramsci, Philosophy and the Masses"[10] also places special emphasis on Gramsci's anti-fatalism and future-oriented political thinking. Since for Gramsci truth is a rationality that becomes, human consciousness must be future-oriented in order to avoid falling into "scientific naturalism" which relies on total human passivity and explains historical events functionally—*ex post facto* (pp. 320-323).

However, argues Vajda, since the search for rationality is constantly tied to the elaboration of real needs, Gramsci leaves us with a problem by entrusting this process to an intellectual elite: if the meaning of real needs is to be worked out 'from above,' the masses may easily become 'objects' in the hands of 'subjects' (pp. 324-325). Mondolfo's "On Gramsci and the Philosophy of Praxis" expresses a similar reservation about the elite-party theory. The suggested alternative is a program conceived and willed uniformly by the proletariat in preparation for a new society (p. 127).

There are several problems with these positions. First of all, Mondolfo's solution is rather simplistic *vis-à-vis* contemporary socio-political organization: a party, an organization, a lobby, whatever the name might be, remains an indispensable for implementing the lengthy "directive" task as envisaged by Gramsci. Secondly, there can be no doubt that, as with any party and-or institution, the danger of elitist involution is always there. But this is precisely the problem Gramsci's notion of *cultural* hegemony tries to guard against. Guidance (*direzione*), based on the acceptance of common and integrated values (*civiltà*), must precede power (*dominazione*). Broadly based and socially open to an entire society whose ideas, mores and needs it is continuously called upon to reformulate, the *blocco storico* aims

10. Originally published in English in *Telos*, 15 (Spring 1973), pp. 148-156.

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at reshaping a whole people. As Salvadori notes, the problem of revolution entails the process of carrying the masses through "the revolution of the minds" (p. 237); and Mondolfo himself concedes that when an ideology becomes rooted in the consciousness and the will of the masses, the latter become a "material force" capable of changing society (p. 125). Political participation in a historical bloc offers the safest possible guarantee against elitism—the framework within which intellectuals contest their own function and "educators become educated."

Finally, in this context which is a *process*, it makes no sense to single out "real" needs in a quasi-primitive communist fashion. Insofar as needs are historical, i.e., concretely related to the material and ideational potential of society, the process of defining them is a function of the exigencies created by living praxis. Therefore, in building a unified culture, reifying needs, i.e., needs manufactured to promote special interests and antagonisms, will lose their commodity character and will appear for what they really are.

In the comparative treatment type of interpretation, Paris' sympathetic essay parallels Gramsci's anti-objectivism to that of Lukacs' on the specific problems created by Bukharin's *Manual* (pp. 215-224). On the Sorel-Gramsci relationship, Bracco contributes a well-written informative piece that traces the philosophical and political stages through which Gramsci had distanced himself from Sorel by the time of the *Notebooks*. Bracco brings out an interesting fact that all-out revolutionists would probably be glad to forget. In his *Il Partito comunista*, Gramsci credits Sorel with a crucial insight with respect to reforming a society. Gramsci asserts that solidarity among men is not enough to chan ge a culture; just as the ideological power of the Church relied on the establishment and expansion of a network of moral, judicial and philosophical relations, the task of creating a new civilization necessitates the building of analogous social mechanisms (p. 405).

Paggi's ultra-Leninist, enthusiastic interpretation also casts Gramsci as a great admirer of the Leninist dialectic—the infamous glass of water passage which is quoted and analyzed in its full transparency. In general, Paggi presents Gramsci constantly weighing his thought against Leninist theory and practice, unaware of the fact that Gramsci actually had little access to Lenin's work. But we should really doubt that knowledge of this would affect Paggi's viewpoint.

The "completely negative" category includes an excerpt from Perlini, an utterly condescending Trotskyist interview with Colletti and an essay by Sechi that finds Gramsci short of a Marxist position by virtue of his attachment to a Hegelian-Crocean instead of the Hegelian-Marxian tradition(pp. 187-191).

Finally, in the mainly exegetical, favorable category belong articles by Garin, Luporini, Marcovic, Debray, Salvadori and Bobbio working without particular originality over the themes of praxis, historicism, objectivity and revolution. There is a general convergence of opinions on Gramsci's dialectical conception of praxis, his concrete, anti-Crocean historicism, his historicized, human-oriented notion of objectivity and his subjectivist but non-voluntaristic approach to revolution.

In sum, this volume constitutes a useful guide to some of the major aspects of Gramsci's thought.

*Eleni Mahaira-Odoni*

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Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Political Writings (1910-1920)*, with additional texts by Bordiga and Tasca. Edited by Quintin Hoare. Translated by John Mathews. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977.

During the decade preceding his arrest by Mussolini's police in November, 1926, Antonio Gramsci, by his own account, "wrote enough words to fill up fifteen to twenty volumes of four hundred pages apiece." Later, he modestly judged these writings as "stuff written for the day it appeared and I always thought it would be dead the day after." [1] Quintin Hoare's new edition of Gramsci's journalistic writings, as well as an earlier selection by Cavalcanti and Piccone, however, proves that Gramsci was mistaken about the worth of the "stuff" he wrote for the days during World War I and the ensuing *Biennio Rosso*. Instead, as even Hoare acknowledges, a "profoundly original body of thought" (p. xiii) can be discovered in Gramsci's daily and weekly contributions to the journals *Il Grido del Popolo, Avanti!,* and *L'Ordine Nuovo*. His theoretical vision, as it unfolds in these publications from 1914 to 1921, ranges through a broad spectrum of issues: popular culture, working class education, the Russian revolution, the politics of the PSI and the CGL, the political significance of workers' councils, the failure of the Risorgimento, colonialism, and the Mezzogiorno, the class basis of the fascist reaction, and the creation of the PCI. Much of the political and social theory elaborated more fully in the *Prison Notebooks* finds its initial articulation in these journalistic articles.

Yet, most importantly, this selection concentrates strongly on the *Biennio Rosso* period. In doing so, the assemblage of Gramsci's writings documents his changing assessment of the roles to be played by workers' councils and mass parties in an Italian socialist revolution. He accentuates the importance of popular politics for altering mass consciousness which falsely accepts notions of culture as undigested factual knowledge, history as de-humanized natural process, and education as mechanical conditioning. Apolitical men, especially those in the fold of the PSI and the CGL, view history as if "events are hatched off-stage in the shadows; unchecked hands weave the fabric of collective life—and the masses of citizens know nothing" (p. 17). Gramsci's writings combat uncritical thinking—both mechanistic Marxism and positivistic liberalism—that permits the political fortunes of the working class to be "manipulated in the interests of narrow horizons, of the immediate ends of small groups of activists—and the mass of citizens know nothing" (p. 17). To prompt the working class to realize that "events should be seen to be the intelligent work of men, and not the products of chance, of fatality" (p. 18), Gramsci asserts the mediation of a new popular culture,[2] based upon active class will, can be discovered in the workers' council.

Gramsci's commitment to enact the ethical moment as political practice through the mediation of the workers' councils has several derivations. Frustrated by the parliamentary strategy of the PSI, Gramsci's vision of the PSI as a party committing suicide through its electoral struggles with the bourgeois parties initially prevented him from appreciating its significant strengths as well as its *potential* for playing a

1. Giuseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary* (New York, 1970), p. 104.
2. Such a new popular culture would not be based on useless factual or intellectual knowledge. For Gramsci, "culture is something quite different. It is organization, discipline of one's inner self, a coming to terms with one's own personality; it is the attainment of a higher awareness, with the aid of which one succeeds in understanding one's own historical value, one's own function in life, one's own rights and obligations" (p. 11).

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more decisive mass political role. Consequently, he turned to the *comissioni interne* established prior to the war by the workers' syndicates in the automobile plants around Turin for his political inspiration. His initial faith in their potential as revolutionary political mediations, in turn, swelled immensely with each new report he received concerning the Russian revolution and the soviets: "the soviets were the basic organizations to be integrated and developed, and the Bolsheviks became the government party precisely because they maintained that State power should rest upon and be controlled by the Soviets" (p. 53). The flashes and fragments of news on the Russian revolution suggested that the Russian working classes were making their own historical destiny and culture through the organization of soviets rather than the bureaucratic machinations of political parties. Consequently, in those days prior to "war communism," Gramsci held that "the Russian revolution is the triumph of freedom; its organization is based on spontaneity, not on the dictates of a 'hero' who imposes himself through violence. It is a continuous and systematic elevation of a people, following the lines of a hierarchy, and creating for itself one by one the organs that the new social life demands" (p. 54). To systematically advance and elevate the Italian working class, Gramsci resolved to create the organs that the new social life demanded from within the workplace, from the *comissioni interne* would emerge the revolutionary *consigli di fabbrica*.[3] Potentially, Gramsci saw that the party must "become an Anti-state that is prepared to take over from the bourgeoisie all its social functions as ruling class" (p. 58), but the factory councils were to impart to "each individual a clear, precise, rationally acquired conviction that the only feasible road to individual and social well-being is via political and social organization" (p. 58).

Prior to the setbacks of 1919 and 1920, Gramsci saw the workers' councils as embodying the essence of a consciousness-changing proletarian movement. The party was, at best, a secondary adjunct to the primary struggle for self-determination in the workplace. The communists offered nothing of real value unless they revealed "among the masses a capacity, the beginnings of a new life, the aspiration to create new institutions and the historical drive to renew human society from the roots upward" (p. 172). The communists as a group probed "capacities" and prodded "aspirations," but it was for the *workers*, organizing their *own* councils in their *own* particular factories, to renew society from the roots upward. Hence, the political imagination of a communist party did not forge a "liberation of spirit, the establishment of a new moral order" (p. 30). On the contrary, such transformations were laid at the doorstep of human labor in the realm of necessity: "the development of heavy industry has created the conditions for the working class to acquire an awareness of its own historical autonomy; an awareness of the possibility of constructing, through its own ordered and disciplined work, a new system of economic and juridical relations based on the special function performed by the working class in the life of the world" (pp. 172-173). The councils, unlike the existing working class unions or parties, induce the workers to redefine themselves as *producers,* as historical agents, instead of *commodities* or mechanical objects. Being based on the everyday practices of the shopfloor, Gramsci firmly believed the councils could give "workers direct responsibility for production,

3. Fiori notes that Gramsci had studied "Russian experiment with 'Soviets,' or councils, and the development of the factory and farm councils into which the workers and peasants had organized themselves. And he asked himself: 'Is there in Italy anything, any working-class institution, which one might compare to the Soviets, anything of the same nature?... Is there any germ, any first wish or tendency in the direction of government by Soviets here in Italy, in Turin?' The answer was yes. 'There does exist in Italy, in Turin, an embryonic form of worker government: the internal committees' " (p. 119).

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provide them with an incentive to improve their work, instill a conscious and voluntary discipline, and create a producer's mentality—the mentality of a creator of history" (p. 101).

For the most part, Gramsci's trust in the discipline of the workplace to forge a common consciousness among the urban working class proved to be quite naive. Workers' councils did create an awareness of autonomy, the possibility of a new social system, and the mentality of historical creators. Yet, in the conjunctural moment, these hard-won possibilities could not be translated politically into autonomy, a new society, or historical creation. The exceptional character of the heavily industrialized Turin region, the considerable strength of the large industrialists, and the resistance of the PSI and CGL to the council communists all combined to entrap Gramsci's theoretical designs in a cage of harsh political realities. Leading up to the events of 1920, Gramsci held that "the Factory Council is the model of the proletarian state" (p. 100). The outcome of the 1920 strikes and factory occupations, nevertheless, bore the model out as one of confused indecision. Without an overarching political program, the working class, when mobilized in the councils, "soon found itself trapped and imprisoned in a system of watertight compartments, bewildered, disillusioned, exposed to all manner of anarchoid temptations" (p. 157). Instead of forming "a collective personality, a collective soul, a collective will" (p. 345), the councils at various plants indulged in "factory egoism," while at many sites "ordered and disciplined work" failed to form a "producer's mentality" and the workers simply deserted *en masse*. In the councils, Gramsci asserted, "the will of the masses is what is stated in an organic and durable fashion, constructing each day a new cell of the working-class psychology, of the new social organization" (p. 175). Unfortunately, the new social organizations were neither organic nor durable expressions of mass will because on their own the masses could not direct their will or realize their capacity. Ultimately, as Giolitti mediated a compromise between the workers and the industrialists, Gramsci admitted "the mistake of believing that only the masses can achieve the communist revolution" (p. 351). In the early days of the occupation, Gramsci observed the workers could "rely on no one but themselves" (p. 345) in the creation of their own history. Sadly, this fact turned out to be the workers' major problem. When cornered in the immediacy of their particular factories, their "disciplined labor relations" gave them no sense of *collective* action or *class* strategy. "Every factory looked to its own defenses, like a militia. There was no coordination," as Gramsci later condeded, "there was no communist party."

The exigencies of political struggle during 1919 and 1920, then, forced Gramsci to re-evaluate the role of the party. As he had recognized before with regard to unions, in councils alone "the working class is not organized into forms which accord with its real historical structure, and is not mobilized into a formation that is ceaselessly adapting itself to the laws governing the inner process of the real historical development of the class itself" (pp. 98-99). In making this recognition, however, Gramsci does not embrace an elitist-vanguard party model. To the contrary, he maintains his faith in mass-popular organization and simply substitutes the popular party for the workers' councils in his schema. A mass-based and popularly-organized party performs all of the social and educational duties of the councils, while at the same time solving the considerable political problems of the council organizations.

4. From *L'Ordine Nuovo*, October 9, 1920, quoted in Gwyn Williams, *Proletarian Order: Antonio Gramsci, Factory Councils, and the Origins of Communism in Italy, 1911-1921* (London, 1975), p. 253.

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In these writings, Gramsci's concept of the party increasingly gains definition as the working class pedagogical state *in nuce*. It roots itself in the entire working class because every effective party is a class party mediating the *totality* of its particular class relations. The party embodies, in Gramsci's view, "the vigilant revolutionary consciousness of the whole of the exploited class. . . so that it may win their permanent trust and thus become their guide and intellect" (p. 141). Acting as a guide or class intellect, the party frees the working class from its own immediacy, the passion and spontaneity of living the already existing culture. As the working class pedagogical state *in nuce*, the party anticipates the transformative changes of popular culture allowing the workers access to their collective essence, "the worker takes his place in the Communist Party and there 'discovers' and 'invents' original ways of living, collaborates 'consciously' in the world's activity, thinks, foresees, becomes responsible, becomes an organizer rather than someone who is organized and feels he forms a vanguard that pushes ahead and draws the masses of the people after it" (p. 333). Factory councils may spark this change, in addition to laying the basis for working class administration of the economy and industries after the transition; still, Gramsci realizes that the party fully transforms and guides the working class. To fully obliterate the "inner imprisonment" of working class culture, the Communist party renews and redirects the consciousness of economic objects to reveal their ultimate potential as ethico-political subjects in the prefigurative party-state. For Gramsci, "the Communist Party is the instrument and historical form of the process of inner liberation through which the worker is transformed from *executor* to *initiator*, from *mass* to *leader* to *guide*, from brawn to brain to purpose. As the Communist Party is formed, a seed of liberty is planted that will sprout to its full height only after the workers' State has organized the requisite material conditions" (p. 333). After the factory occupation failures in 1920, Gramsci forsakes the workers' councils as the ultimate source of an emergent revolution. Instead, the new communist party had to be organized out of the PSI to sustain the Italian *proletarian* movement as a *revolutionary* movement.

For the most part, Hoare's collection of Gramsci's articles adequately documents the "attempt to hammer out, in intimate relation with mass proletarian practice in Turin, a theory of specific organizational forms capable of harnessing the full revolutionary potential of the class and representing the embryos of a future soviet State in Italy" (p. xiv). Unfortunately, far too much of the *New Left Review* perspective creeps in with the editor's effort to vindicate the "correctness" of Bordiga's vanguardism and Tasca's frontism over the "mistakes made" (p. xv) by Gramsci's council communism. Additional texts by Bordiga and Tasca are included to firmly buttress the editor's opinion that Gramsci theoretically failed to "grasp the essential role of the revolutionary party in centralizing the struggle against the existing order and organizing the insurrectionary seizure of power" (p. xv). In fact, these selections further demonstrate the greater sophistication of Gramsci's notions of both the party and the councils over those of Bordiga and Tasca.

Bordiga's pragmatic *pastiche* of electoral abstentionism, party vanguardism, and party manipulation of the workers' councils sharply contrasts with Tasca's orthodox trade union strategies. Prior to the revolutionary transition, Bordiga takes an instrumental tack on unions and councils; these structures are useful to the Communist party which "needs organs in which it can operate" (p. 214). Following the revolution, unions and councils would become the party's conduits for industrial administration. Gramsci divorces councils from unions as they represent two distinct forms of struggle for two different goals. Unions encourage a false class consciousness

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based upon a "commodity mentality" struggling for higher wages. Tasca, on the other hand, unites the two struggles, "since the 'council' is nothing but the expression of trade-union activity at the workplace and the union is the master body grouping the councils by productive sector, co-ordinating and disciplining their action" (p. 252). For Tasca, the structural question was simple, "the council is the cellular unit of a whole—the trade union" (p. 252). For Tasca, councils and unions engaged in the same battle; hence, his revolutionary formula, especially after the 1920 occupations, was to restore and strengthen the trade unions to organize and co-ordinate the working class movement. "No cause would be more worthy of hazarding all the forces of the proletariat," he concluded, than a revolution provoked "on the elementary terrain of trade union freedom" (p. 254). Gramsci reacted to this weak inspiration by arguing that Tasca's orthodox trade unionist tactics vitiated both council and party practices in returning to a false bureaucratic discipline "which means giving a factory codification to relations between exploiter and exploited" (p. 258).

Bordiga's vision of the party, the workers' councils, and the unions varied immensely from that of both Gramsci and Tasca. Bordiga's elitist-vanguard party, which grows straight out of Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?*, is attractive to a great many students of Italian politics, including Quintin Hoare and Gwyn Williams,[5] because of its simple project: "the elaboration of a consciousness, a political culture, in the *leaders*, through a more serious study of the problems of the revolution, with fewer distractions from spurious electoral, parliamentary, and minimalist activities" (pp. 232-233). In a two-pronged attack on his rivals, Bordiga asserted that Gramsci and Tasca lacked the "proper" party perspective. "The forging of a sound and healthy revolutionary movement in Italy," Bordiga claimed, "will never be accomplished by advancing new organs modelled on future forms, like factory councils or soviets—just as it was an illusion to believe that the revolutionary spirit could be salvaged from reformism by importing it into the unions, seen as the nuclei of the future society" (p. 232). Here Gramsci's vision of the party utterly surpasses Bordiga's uncritical acceptance of the Leninist precedent. Instead of modelling revolutionary organization on its future forms, like Gramsci's notion of both the party and, in part, the councils, Bordiga would create the future by reproducing the political past only under the enlightened aegis of the party vanguard.

These recent attempts by Hoare, Williams, and others to "Bordigaize" Gramsci because of *his* failure to understand the "revolutionary party" are ill-conceived. In fact, it was Bordiga who failed to clearly understand the role of the party. Gramsci immediately realized that Bordiga's party vanguardism would be self-defeating inasmuch as it relied on the crude reflection upon existing political appearances by an enlightened leadership. The masses were to be passively led into the working class state by Bordigan leaders. Yet, such a vision of the Italian political future, Gramsci knew, would only reproduce the elitist-centralized organization of the past except for its "working class" leadership. Gramsci's conception of the party has nothing to do with such crude beliefs. Rather, it prefiguratively produces its own revolutionary popular practices in the process of changing the present into the future. The party is historical *essence* transformed into popular practice, not existing *appearance* turned to bureaucratic manipulation. To be sure, Gramsci made "extremely serious mistakes" (p. xiv) in his tactics during the *Biennio Rosso* with regard to the party question. Yet,

5. See Quintin Hoare's and Geoffrey Nowell Smith's "Introduction" to *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York, 1971), pp. xxv-lxxxvii. Also see Gwyn Williams, *Proletarian Order, op.cit.*

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he soon adduced his own corrections by elaborating a unique image of the communist party. Any attempt to "Bordigaize" or "Leninize" Gramsci only takes away much from this very sophisticated concept of the party.

Finally, in these articles, Gramsci demonstrates his insight into Italian political realities as he forbodes the advent of fascism. As the events of national politics spilled into the *Biennio Rosso*, two channels opened for further movement—one into a predatory fascist regime based on the northern industrial cartels and the southern "landowners" and the other into a communist-led socialist revolution. In Gramsci's analysis, fascism always existed in Italy as the "outgrowth of the disastrous economic conditions to which capitalism has reduced the Italian people; it is an outgrowth of the nationalist illusions and opportunist delusions of a State that can no longer guarantee food, clothing and housing for the population. Reaction is the attempt to wriggle out of the situation by means of a new war" (p. 353). Even under these conditions, this ruling bloc could not make ends meet in either the state or the economy. Consequently, the urban petty bourgeoisie and their northern industrial backers turned to fascism, or as Gramsci labels them, "the Monkey people," to maintain the interests of landed property and large industry by embarking upon wars in the Adriatic and Africa. "Having ruined Parliament, the petty bourgeoisie is currently ruining the bourgeois state," Gramsci records as he accurately realizes, "the Monkey people make news, not history. They leave their mark in newspapers, but provide no material for books" (p. 374). If nothing else, Gramsci left a theoretical legacy which will remain part of the revolutionary heritage for many years to come.

*Tim Luke*

Carl Boggs, *Gramsci's Marxism*. New York: Urizen Books, 1976.

Boggs' interpretation of Gramsci's work provides a lucid introduction to his thought and its contemporary implications. It elucidates those key elements that are not always clearly defined or well developed and sets them in a framework opposed to the mechanistic formulations of the Second International while differentiating Gramsci's political theory from that of Lenin.

In the opening chapter, Boggs stresses that "Gramsci reacted against the prevailing tendency to seize only the materialist, economic side of Marxism in a never-ending search for natural, uniform laws of historical development; he struggled to restore the elements of praxis and totality to Marxist theory by reintegrating the active or 'subjective' dimension without which the revolutionary process itself could not develop" (p. 21). Thus, Boggs highlighted Gramsci's theory of hegemony by linking it to broader strategic considerations.[1] "Hegemony," as Boggs defines it, is an "entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs, morality, etc., that is in one way or another supportive of the established order and the class interests that dominate it" (p. 39). In this sense, it is "an 'organizing principle,' or world-view (or combination of such world-views), that is

1. For other discussions of hegemony, cf. Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (New York, 1969), pp. 179-184; John Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (Stanford, 1967), pp. 201-212; and Thomas R. Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 36:2 (April-June, 1975).

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diffused by agencies of ideological control and socialization into every area of daily life."

Central to Gramsci's analysis of hegemony is an effort to understand why the European working classes in general had failed to develop revolutionary consciousness. In an illuminating discussion on "Mass Consciousness and Revolution," Boggs points out that "the basic premise of nineteenth-century Marxism was that the contradiction between wage labor and capital would lead inexorably to proletarian transcendence of the mature capitalist system" (p. 55). That this was not the course of development is the stimulus of Lenin's model, to which Boggs poses a Gramscian alternative. The problem becomes one of "how to move the oppressed beyond the immediacy of their everyday concern without at the same time obliterating their spontaneous energies" (p. 70). The elaboration of socialist consciousness evolves as part of a long-term (what Gramsci called "organic" as opposed to "conjunctural" or momentary) transformation. The party (and within it the intellectual) plays a crucial role in this process, but, in contrast to Lenin, Gramsci saw the emergence of revolutionary consciousness not as an external phenomenon, but as developing out of the conditions of proletarian existence. The crucial difference between Lenin and Gramsci lies in Lenin's understanding of the "external element" as a mediating force that imparts revolutionary consciousness from without, versus Gramsci's emphasis on these elements contributing to the revolutionary process as "an internalized force, with the oppressed groups of the 'revolutionary historical bloc' pressing their claims as political subjects in the momentous struggle to assert a new socialist hegemony" (p. 83).

What is crucial here is the conception of the factory councils, which could be seen as synthesizing the visionary elements of Lenin's *State and Revolution*[2] as well as earlier anarchistic conceptions such as Kropotkin's "integrated" human being and the left critique of the council communists.[3] Gramsci's conception of revolution, stressing the liberating experience of participation within relatively small-scale structures, is envisioned as a lengthy, "organic" process. Gramsci argued that a fallacy of previous Marxist thinking had been the "acceptance of historical reality produced by capitalist initiative," and a preoccupation with seizing existing state power. Considering the role of spontaneous workers' committees in the Russian, Hungarian and German upheavals of the period, Gramsci wrote that "the socialist state cannot emerge within the institutions of the capitalist state, but is a fundamentally new creation in relation to them, if not in relation to the history of the proletariat" (p. 91).

The councils would be *public* institutions in which the whole mass of the workers would participate and, in Gramsci's words, "feels itself to be something through this

2. In "Lenin's Utopianism: *State and Revolution*," in *Slavic Review*, 30:1 (March, 1971), Rodney Barfield argues the centrality of Lenin's most utopian ideas in *State and Revolution* concerning popular participation and the overcoming of the division of labor. What actually happened once Lenin was in power is another question, indicating that a completely different view prevailed during the period of transition. On this, see Ulysses Santamaria and Alain Manville, "Lenin and the Problem of the Transition," *Telos*, 27 (Spring 1976), pp. 79-96. As Lucio Colletti has pointed out, "the so-called phase of transition to socialism is actually an extremely protracted, secular process whose length was never forseen by Marx or Lenin, during which Communist leaderships exercise power in the name of Marxism in the absence of any real theory of this power—let alone any control by the masses over whom they rule." From "Interview with Lucio Colletti," *New Left Review*, 86 (July-August, 1974), p. 15.

3. While linked to earlier utopian socialist and anarchist theory, as well as to Marx's project of elements of the Paris Commune as the prefiguration of a liberated society, the theory of council communism in Pannekoek and Gorter emerged out of their reflections on the role of the soviets in the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 and the failure of the council movement in Germany. A good overview of the theory of council communism can be found in Richard Gombin, *The Origins of Modern Leftism* (London and Baltimore, 1975), pp. 77-117.

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activity." It would be a process through which workers would be transformed from "citizens" to "comrades": alienated social relations inherent in capitalism would be broken down, enabling workers to take control of their work and their lives and acquire a consciousness of their "organic unity," eventually counterposing themselves as a whole to the capitalist system. Beyond this, as Boggs points out, the public and radically democratic character of the councils would provide an effective counter to the bureaucratization endemic to large-scale organization. They might also offset the danger of de-radicalization that such diverse theorists as Michels, Lenin, Luxemburg, and Sorel had already analyzed in Social Democracy. This prospect would be enhanced, Gramsci argued, because the councils would tend to "unleash" the class struggle rather than domesticate it; their popular and radically democratic character would provide new opportunities for workers to express grievances and formulate demands, and make plans for action. It was through the councils, in Gramsci's view, that the workers could best recover their subjectivity.

While Boggs places great emphasis on the links of Gramsci to the prefigurative tradition, he makes it quite clear that with the crushing of the Italian council movement and the rise of fascism, Gramsci turned his attention largely to the role of the mass revolutionary party. Here Boggs emphasizes the "primacy of politics" that Lenin restored to the Marxist tradition and the deep impression Lenin's criticism of economism and spontaneism made on Gramsci.[4]

Major questions remain about the coherence of Gramsci's conception of the party, which are not yet fully explored in *Gramsci's Marxism*. Yet, as Boggs emphasizes, it is a concept that is significantly different from Lenin's and one that suggests an alternative model of revolutionary strategy for the conditions in Western liberal "democracies." *Gramsci's Marxism* concludes with an epilogue on the relevance of Gramsci's thought to contemporary radical politics, though that concern is certainly implicit throughout the work. If *Gramsci's Marxism* brings new perspectives to that discussion, it will have met a major need.

*Ray Pratt*

4. If there is a certain ambiguity in Boggs' interpretation of Gramsci's conception of the party here, that can also be seen in other interpretations—most notably those of Lucio Magri and the *Manifesto* group in Italy. Cf. Lucio Magri, "Problems of the Marxist Theory of the Revolutionary Party," *New Left Review*, 60 (March-April, 1970), pp. 92-128.

Gershom G. Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*. New York: Schocken Books, 1977.

Scholem's powers are primarily exegetical. An original thinker he's not. But the object of his life-long exegesis, namely the Kabbalah, and the messianic and mystical tradition within Judaism, allows for insight. For instance, this from chapter one, "With Gershom Scholem: An Interview": "The kabbalist has a fundamental feeling that there is mysteri—a secret—in the world... If humanity should ever lose the feeling that there is mysteri—a secret—in the world, then it's all over with us. But I don't believe we'll ever come to that.

Scholem's position is not that there is only mystery in the world; rather that there is also mystery. As compared to a view of the world which sees and accepts it as

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dominated by technology, or to a deterministic view of history, Scholem's position makes sense. Although it remains abstract, it resists these two outlooks: it represents an opening towards something else. If one were to try to find an equivalent for the religious formulation, "secret in the world," within the Marxist tradition, spontaneity would be the word that comes closest, although the two traditions have always been more comfortable to remain on non-speaking terms.

Walter Benjamin is the man who brought them as close together as they have come. There are two essays on him in this book, as well as two letters Scholem wrote to him: one urges him to come to a decision on his relationship to Judaism—read Zionism—and the second berates him for contaminating himself with Marxism.

If Critical Theory and Brecht relate to Benjamin the Marxist, Scholem relates to Benjamin the Jew. Jealously. He sees Benjamin's Marxism as nothing but flirtation with alien matter. He is convinced that Marxism admits only of "strict observation of the economic-materialist methods of research." This may be true, about Stalinism: Benjamin may well have proved as incompatible to the Communist Party of Germany as was Reich. But it still misses the point.

It misses exactly what was so special about Benjamin. Namely, that he took the Messianic impulse seriously, and that he understood the only force congruent with it was the revolutionary left, to which he committed himself, without thereby giving up the specifically Jewish impulse that led him there, but rather hoping to fulfill it.

Benjamin's work and death gain rather than lose meaning for us because of his "experiment with the attitude of the materialist." If he did not resist death more than he did it is perhaps because he felt both the necessity and the impossibility of his hope being realized in his life-time.

It is Scholem who loses out. By freezing Marxism as he does, his categories of messianism and mysticism never come alive as they do with Benjamin. They drain off into academic discussion, cultivated ambiguities. As in such chapters as "Reflection on Jewish Theology," which, if political kind of chess game Marxists like to play, gives an excellent example of the kind of game theologians like to play. Learned.

Benjamin did not feel that messianic energy, the possibility of a new world, pertained only to Jews. Scholem, in effect, does. (Implicitly, one can see critical theory as having taken that energy entirely beyond the pale of Jews and Judaism, a step Judaism allows for more easily than other traditions, and without requiring or getting acknowledgement.)

After all is said and done, Zionism remains the true center—and limit—of the book. One can have only respect for some of this. We see Scholem as a youth who can't live with his middle class family's all-too-eager desire to assimilate into a Germany that gives assimilation the lie: it was not through unwillingness on his family's party that "no Christian ever set foot in our home. . ." We see Scholem opposing World War I (as Buber apparently did not) on the ground that Jews were foolish to assume a common interest with Germans, and succeeding in a draft dodge. We see him, still as a youth, uncompromisingly attack the ethos of German-Jewish fellowship, coming as it did only from Jews. We read of him, after World War II, rejecting a German offer to engage in dialogue, by way of an excellent history of German-Jewish relations, and a refusal to pretend that after the war, of all times, the possibility of such a dialogue had somehow come into existence.

But just as *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis* reveals the strength of Zionism as practiced by Scholem, it also reveals its weakness. In a book containing such essays as "Against the Myth of the German-Jewish Dialogue," "Israel and the Disapora," "On

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Eichmann," and so on, there is nothing concerning Israel and the Arabs, nothing on the Arabs, barely a mention of them in all its pages. Here Scholem completely shares the failure of Zionism. Better for the Arabs not to exist; if they continue to do so, ignore them.

Along with the injustice this attitude visits upon the Palestinians, there is a poverty about it that reacts upon the Israelis. Just as the state of Israel has made no real effort to come to terms with the Palestinians, so it is difficult to think of Israeli thinkers or artists who have made contact with that non-Jewish world in the midst of which they live. The result has been lack of fructification within the Jewish tradition.

It is one of Scholem's gravest concerns that the tradition be renewed. But contrary to his hopes, the source of that revivification cannot be found by further foraging within its insularity. For an Israeli Jew especially, it can only be in and by a new relationship to the Palestinians. Even there, however, a way out of the tradition can be found within the tradition. For the prophets, justice had a universal, not merely Jewish meaning.

Otherwise, the relationship of Jews to Israel can best be compared to that of the Jew and the Golem, as quoted from another of Scholem's works:

"They call him golem and use him as a servant... On his forehead is written emeth (truth): every day he gains weight and becomes somewhat larger and stronger than all the others in the house, regardless of how little he was to begin with. For fear of him, they therefore erase the first letter, so that nothing remains but meth (he is dead), whereupon he collapses and turns to clay again. But one man's golem once grew so tall, and he heedlessly let him keep on growing so long that he could no longer reach his forehead. In terror he ordered the servant to take off his boots, thinking that when he bent down he could reach his forehead. So it happened, and the first letter e was successfully erased, but the whole heap of clay fell on the Jew and crushed him" (*On the Kabbalah*, p. 159).

*Harvey Blume*

John Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974.

Foster's book is almost like a series of Pandora's boxes ensconced one within another in the manner of Russian *matryoshka* dolls. The study describes the complex relations between emerging social classes during the Industrial Revolution. Three sorts of problems arise: what really happened to the working class during the process of industrialization, the relevance of historical materialism, and the political implications of a spontaneously revolutionary class consciousness. Foster derives his data from a broad aggregation rather than the depth of detail that we have come to expect from labor historians since E.P. Thompson; and his analysis of class consciousness, culture, and revolutionary political action so densely interweaves fact, theory, and polemic that the book's effect is more to stroke still-smoldering fires than to blanket their embers with a definitive historical reinterpretation. It is as though he locates the book at the intersection of two significant and controversial axes—industrialism and Leninism—but neglects to give his readers the precise coordinates.

In contrast to Lenin, Foster argues that during early industrial capitalism, the

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conditions of industrial employment, the deteriorating material conditions of life, and the unitary nature of the workers' culture were sufficient to engender a revolutionary class consciousness. Foster suggests that there is no need for a vanguard party, and certainly no need for non-proletarian intellectuals to goad, instruct, and conceptualize on behalf of the working class. Moreover, Foster tries to show that the English working class, at least until 1850, built up its own cadres—an "inherited corps of Jacobin revolutionaries"—who provided the continuity necessary for a sustained revolutionary movement. In the course of developing this implicit argument, Foster generally eschews literary sources in favor of data on wages and prices, population and household structure, church membership and social networks, and the social origins of successive generations of working-class leaders. He also cites the language used at working-class meetings and in the press.

Foster's explicit thesis can roughly be divided into two major parts concerned respectively with the economic causes and the political effects of the working-class movement of the mid-nineteenth century towns of Oldham, Northampton, and South Sheilds. In the first part of his thesis, Foster hypothesizes that the developing structures of industrial capitalism caused the formation within the working class of an increasingly systematic (or, more exactly, anti-system) group consciousness, which was based on opposition to the property rights of capital and the unequal obligations of labor. During the 1830s and 1840s, this group consciousness rose to the level of class consciousness in the classical sense that Marx and Engels describe. Foster finds that class consciousness developed most fully in a town such as Oldham, where workers had been brought into the cotton and coal industries from the late eighteenth century, and had experienced since that time the periodic economic crises in which these key industries typified the whole of English industrial capitalism. Foster views the English working class, in the microcosm of Oldham, as developing in three main stages. Socialized through the periodic crises and the economic chastisement that they wrought, the working class first developed a labor consciousness (1800-1820), then rose to a class consciousness (1830s-1840s), and finally succumbed to sectional consciousness (or fragmenting false consciousness, after 1850). Thus, Foster's work contributes a middle period to the process of class formation previously described by E.P. Thompson and Gareth Stedman Jones.[1] Foster's argument that this middle period between the "making" and the "remaking" of the working class constitutes the proletariat's most radical and most typically "class" stage turns on the distinctiveness of the working-class movement in Oldham. There, in contrast to Northampton and South Shields, with their differing industrial structures, the mid-nineteenth century labor force seemed prepared to make a bid for state power through political and economic—and definitely extra-legal—tactics. At the height of this class consciousness and the political movement which flowed from it, the workers of Oldham *saw through* their employers' wage manipulations; they satirized bourgeois class culture, thwarted the owners' efforts to use governmental and military force to discipline non-bourgeois and anti-state behavior, and exerted pressure on parts of the voting population (although they themselves were not yet enfranchised) to elect pro-labor candidates. To clinch the argument that this behavior constitutes class consciousness, Foster asserts that the Oldham workers did all this with "intellectual conviction."

1. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1966) and Gareth Stedman Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900; Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class," *Journal of Social History,* 7 (1974), pp. 460-507.

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The second part of his thesis explains the mid-century "liberalization" of the English bourgeoisie as a response to the revolutionary pressure built up by the workers' movement. In contrast to the usual interpretations, which assume that the workers' movement perished either because of its own weakness or because of more favorable economic conditions, Foster documents how the bourgeoisie reconstructed the entire working-class community in a deliberate effort to restabilize—in reality, first to destabilize then to realign—the basic institutions and the less formal arrangements of social, cultural, and work life. Thus, Foster shows that the employer-government class took the working class as a serious, systematic opposition, though lacking the right to vote. Indeed, according to Foster, the bourgeoisie took the movement so seriously that they completely reformulated their resopnse to it. Previously, the bourgeoisie had opted for outright repression, including an attempt to impose garrison rule in the Oldham area, the imprisonment of protesters, and wage cuts. During the 1840s, however, the ruling class changed its strategy from coercion to compromise, from obvious repressiveness to apparent permissiveness, by elaborating the set of policies that we call "liberalization." Thus Foster argues that the very success of the workers' movement ultimately led to its defeat. That is, the hegemonic culture of industrial society which subjugated the proletariat had originated in the ruling class's defensive response to the revolutionary threat that they saw coming at them from below. Far from regarding the working class as a paper tiger, the bourgeoisie saw them as a potent force.

Although his discussion could be focused more clearly, Foster implicitly recognizes that this policy was comprised of analytically separable political, economic, industrial, and cultural components. So, despite the absence of any elaborated theoretical framework, we may take much of *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* as documentation of the construction of bourgeois hegemony. Economically and militarily, of course, the bourgeoisie had control almost by definition over the working class. Politically, as Foster shows, the bourgeoisie after 1850 put together electoral combinations in which candidates and programs were manipulated for the class's benefit. Working-class leaders who had shown radical promise were coopted into the legal, i.e., the bourgeois, parties. This isolated those who remained faithful to the workers' movement from effective political representation. There was now a distinction between "legal" and "illegal" representation of the workers' interests, although the former's dependence on the bourgeois parties precluded the continuation by legal means of the global demands made by the latter. In their neighborhoods, too, the members of the working class were segregated and isolated according to the most parochial criteria, which inhibited the formation of an inter-ethnic working-class community. Culturally, the working class was increasingly subjected to the authority of the bourgeoisie, as mediated in the work community by foremen of various sorts and in the residential community by the ever permeable lower middle class, especially the small shopkeepers. Established working-class institutions such as churches, mutual aid societies, pubs, and fraternal orders were replaced by new institutions like adult education associations, temperance societies, and cooperatives, whose leaders were now drawn from the petty bourgeoisie.

Foster's documentation of the imposition of bourgeois authority in these social and cultural institutions is superb. But his reliance on the social category of the labor aristocracy to explain the mediation of bourgeois authority in industry, while theoretically neat, is empirically problematic. Both in the immediate work situation (the sphere of production) and in the working-class social community (the sphere of consumption), the labor aristocracy represents for Foster the bourgeoisie's *modus*

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*vivendi* with the threat of revolution. While its creation implied a salient reward on which the employers had compromised with the working class, the labor aristocracy really acted as a mechanism of cultural control—indeed, self-control—within the working class. Together with a resurgence of church-related activities and a decline of anti-Establishment meeting-places, the labor aristocracy helped to subdue the revolutionary impetus of the working class under a tightly woven mesh of inter-locking cultural controls, status rewards, and social institutions. In this argument, Foster relies on a depiction of the structure of British industry at mid-century as heavily influenced by pace-setting in the textile and mining sectors which were so important in Oldham. This position has been criticized by Gareth Stedman Jones, another social historian of the period.[2] On the one hand, pace-setting appeared earlier than the mid-century point which would permit Foster to call it part of the liberalization response; on the other hand, pace-setting does not appear as integral a part of the work process in mining as in textiles. Furthermore, there is some question as to whether cotton and mining really typify the structure of British industry at that time.

Like the first portion of Foster's thesis, his overarching concern with demonstrating class consciousness in the middle period of the formation of the English working class also suffers from an insufficiency of empirical fit and a suspicion of ideological exaggeration. To demonstrate class consciousness in the 1830s-1840s, Foster depends on extensive citation of radical speeches. But these convey only a general radical tendency rather than the conscious and reasoned bid for state power that he sees. Moreover, readers who would prefer to accept Foster's more sophisticated materialism, in place of Raymond Williams' argument, may not find the empirical demonstration of Foster's thesis convincing. Following the general argument that Williams has worked out over a period of years,[3] we could identify the Oldham workers' anti-capitalist statements as the fruits not so much of revolutionary class consciousness as of the residual democratic practices that they brought with them from the primordial communities. Expressed in terms of a sense of inherent self-worth, a respect for decency, a scorn for their employers' opulence and reliance on militarism, the workers' values could be called either revolutionary or traditional—in Williams' terms, either "emergent" or "residual." Foster does not prove the workers' rhetoric to be typical of revolutionary cultural forms which are emergent in industrial organization rather than traditional cultural forms which symbolize an anachronistic yet long-lived response to the development of capitalism in both agriculture and industry. In general, Foster proves neither his contention that the Oldham radicals argued from intellectual conviction (although we are not looking, as Foster says, for "Leninist rigor about state power") nor his assumption that the workers' anti-capitalist radicalism at that time was tantamount to a demand for control over the whole society.

The continuing contentiousness of this part of Foster's thesis is very disappointing, for a definitive reinterpretation of this material would suggest a resolution of some basic questions which surround the definition of social class. It is ironic that, while the nineteenth-century formation of the working class has been and continues to be taken as paradigmatic, the very course of proletarian development is still so debatable. Foster's study belongs to that side of the debate which asserts that the working class moved

2. See his review of Foster in *New Left Review*, 90 (March-April, 1975), pp. 35-70.

3. E.g., "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," *New Left Review*, 82 (1973), pp. 3-16, or "Working-Class Attitudes," *New Left Review*, 1 (1960), pp. 26-30. Cf. Terry Eagleton, "Criticism and Politics: The Work of Raymond Williams," *New Left Review*, 95 (January-February, 1976), pp. 3-23.

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"backward" from a more progressive to a less progressive response to its alienation, e.g., from revolutionism to trade unionism and participation in mass parties. However, Foster differs from others who have argued this view in at least two ways. First, he insists that the earlier, more radical phase of the working class exemplifies the new *class consciousness* that Marx and Engels eventually described, instead of the older, radical forms of collective protest against inequality and tyranny which predate the real formation of the working class.[4] Second, he indicates that a working class—especially the historically first working class—can develop a programmatic radicalism which owes nothing to either Marxism or Leninism. But does Foster's material warrant a complete overhaul of the concept of class? It is true that the Oldham workers sought to improve their common position without acknowledging their employers' right to mastery, so that we can agree with Foster that they saw through the cultural (especially the Puritan) façade of the early industrial bourgeoisie. It is also true that they contrasted their oppression as workers with their bosses' power as capitalists, and that they mounted local protests, especially in terms of disarming royal troops, which were closer to insurrection than to food riots. Yet to call these actions the product of revolutionary *class* consciousness in the full-blown sense that Foster intends, especially when there was still no ideology by which the workers could systematically comprehend what was happening to them and to society, is not compelling.

However, Foster achieves great success in illustrating the propositions which are subsidiary to his thesis, though insignificant in themselves. The masterful image that he creates of Oldham's bourgeois and petty bourgeois groupings makes that section of the book (especially chapter 6) invaluable. Here Foster has organized some fine archival research around the proposition that the content of class culture varies over time not only with material interests, but also with the conscious perception of these interests and how best to defend them. So we find the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie continually elaborating cultural practices which will differentiate them from their social subordinates—or which will mask the differences. Despite the apparent contradiction in cultural forms, say, between the Puritanism of the early factory owners and the Anglican comfort of their successors, Foster shows the continuity of intent. The success of both early industrial and late industrial bourgeoisie was due to the interplay between their intermittent, though generally expanding, ability to provide rewards in the forms of jobs and wages and their ability—again, intermittent though generally expanding—to establish themselves as legitimately imposing the goals of the reward situation. Thus base meets superstructure, and the economic power of the "liberal" bourgeoisie rests on cultural girders. As Foster says, " 'Good,' 'evil,' 'Providence' were the passwords, and 'education'—cultural control by the bourgeoisie—the immediate solution." Yet this position raises two questions: whether cultural forms are imposed or chosen, created or imitated, and how the development of cultural forms is timed. The code-word for much of the working-class practice which signified acceptance of bourgeois cultural control is "respectability." But the cultural forms of respectability, including temperance and a strong family life, represent both an imposed and a self-imposed goal.[5] What the

4. This conflicts, for example, with Arthur Rosenberg's description of the degeneration of social democracy as the heterogeneity of sans-coulottes and other radicals yielded to the homogeneity of the nineteenth-century working class. *Democracy and Socialism* (Boston, 1965). Cf. the conclusion of Albert Soboul, *The Sans-Culottes* (Garden City, 1972).

5. See Thompson, *op.cit.*, pp. 418-429, 737ff.; Robert Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh* (New York, 1976); and Christopher Lasch's critique of Edward Shorter in *New York Review of Books*, December 11, 1975.

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bourgeoisie appears to have accomplished around 1850 is finally to have removed the means of attaining this goal, as they had already removed the means of production, from the proletariat's hands. On the question of timing, we might prefer to view the mid-century cultural attack launched by the bourgeoisie more as part of a continuing assault on the labor force's independence than as a new response to the strength of the workers' movement. From 1790 to 1830, in both England and the U.S., there was a continuing attempt—especially through Methodism and voluntary associations—to impose an industrial culture both within and outside the workplace.[6] True, at mid-century there does seem to have been a change in vocabulary and cadres, as well as an increase in the creation of new, dependent, cultural institutions, but these do not necessarily constitute a new policy.

Then what determined the social action of the English working class as historical subject? Disciplined by periodic economic crises, physically distanced from the townhouses and suburban villas of the bourgeoisie, subjected to the ideological representations of the bourgeois will to rule, the proletariat seems in a sense to have *un*learned a certain set of responses to their alienation. Foster is correct in his interpretation that what was involved was more than merely becoming enmeshed in the cooptive schema of mass politics; the working class did lose a sense of radical alternative to industrial capitalism. But whether this consciousness was class or merely collective, whether it was residual or emergent is still problematic. The English working class was historically first and inescapably proletarianized. As Foster shows, it organized itself politically independently of the two great, historical forces—the French Revolution and Marxism—which are considered to define an epoch of revolutionary social action. Such are the historical threads which must be woven into a reinterpretation of the working class.

Finally, there are three difficulties that Foster's book presents to the reader who is not immersed in the period under study. First, Foster does not tie the Oldham movement into developments—especially political developments—in the larger society. While this does away with the mass of details on persons and organizations which make the typical political histories of the period so narrow, it does confuse the reader. Also confusing is Foster's argumentation, which could so easily have been organized and expounded more systematically and more explicitly. The third difficulty is that of the non-English reader, who may appreciate both a map of England and a brief glossary of names and of some of the national figures who had some connection with Oldham (and who thus appear in the text).

Notwithstanding all these *caveats*, Foster has written an instructive and provocative book which contributes to the attempt to study change in the relations of production. *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* makes specific contributions toward redefining social class, defining for the first time the role of the labor aristocracy, substantiating the construction of bourgeois hegemony, and documenting the relationship between social structure and spatial differentiation in urban areas. More broadly, the book is significant in terms of its research on the mechanisms of social and cultural control which develop during industrialization and its methodological insistence on considering cultural and political determinants within the framework of historical materialism.

*Sharon Zukin*

6. Thompson, *op.cit.*, chapter 11; Paul Faler, "Cultural Aspects of the Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Mass., Shoemakers and Industrial Morality, 1826-1860," *Labor History*, 15 (1974), pp. 367-394.

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# SHORT JOURNAL REVIEWS:*

## ACTES DE LA RECHERCHE EN SCIENCES SOCIALES, No. 5-6 (Nov., 1975)

54, Boulevard Raspail, Paris, France. 18 francs per year. Issue theme: "Critique de la tradition lettrée." PIERRE BOURDIEU, *"La Critique du discours lettré."* The issue is introduced as a study of the logic and "interest" of the use of inherited texts in learned discourse. The distinction between internal and external textual analysis (semiotics vs. sociology) is rejected because the formal properties of texts and commentaries are regarded as "social strategies" whose meaning becomes apparent when related to the social conditions of production. JEAN BOLLACK, *"Ulysse chez les philologues."* Critique of classical philology citing its failure to develop a theory of meaning. Consequently, a creeping scholasticism has abandoned exegesis in favor of analysis, discarded meaning to the public domain, and entrenched itself in an esoteric discourse. JEAN-CLAUDE PARIENTE, *"Grammaire générale et grammaire générative."* An attempt to demonstrate that the principles of Port-Royal's *Grammaire Générale*—a Cartesian linguistics—cannot be viewed as a precursor to generative grammar as claimed by Chomsky. LOUIS MARIN, *"La célébration des oeuvres d'art: notes de travail sur un catalogue d'exposition."* Analysis of the catalogue of the exposition 'Les Cubistes' in 1973, aimed at revealing strategies for legitimating particular images of art. PIERRE BOURDIEU, *"La lecture de Marx ou quelques remarques critiques à propos de 'Quelques critiques à propos Lire le Capital'."* A satire accompanied by cartoons on the rhetorical devices of Balibar's reading of Marx, described as a typical example of scholastic discourse, a variant of sacerdotal propheticism and symbolic domination. LUC BOLTANSKI, *"Pouvoir et impuissance: projet intellectuel et sexualité dans le* Journal *d'Amiel."* A socio-biographical study of the relationship between social and personality structures in a Geneva philosopher who has held particular attraction for French intellectuals. Amiel's syndrome is linked to the contraditions inherent in the social position of the intellectual. PIERRE BOURDIEU, *"L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger."* Devastating analysis of the suppressed political discourse in Heidegger's philosophy, which, through a process of euphemistic expression, allows the translation of a political mood into an ontology. JEAN BOLLACK, HEINZ WISMANN, *"Heidegger l'incontournable."* Critical analysis of Heidegger's translations and interpretations of Heraclitus reveals his basic philosophical strategy. SERGIO MICELI, *"Division du travail entre les sexes et division du travail de domination: une étude clinique des anatoliens au Brésil."* Compares bibliographies and writers during the Velha Republic (1889-1939) as a basis for a number of hypotheses regarding the social history of the Brazilian dominating class, especially the reconversion of capital in the form of the career as a writer. PIERRE BOURDIEU, *"Le langage autorisé: note sur les conditions sociales de l'efficacité du discours rituel."* The case of the crisis of religious language (liturgy) is used to illustrate that, contrary to Austinian linguistic analysis, "elocutionary force" is not so much within language itself as it is linked to the effectiveness of the institution that generates the discourse. LUC BOLTANSKI, *"Note sur les échanges philosophiques internationaux."* A comparison of French introductions to books by Heidegger, Habermas, and Austin is used to consider styles of presentation as forms of applying public relations techniques. —DG, RM

## CRITIQUE, No. 7 (Winter 1976-77)

31 Cleveden Road, Glasgow, Scotland. $4 per year (2 issues). Single copies $2. GEORGE HAUPT, *"An Iconoclaust* [sic] *Muzzled: The Nekrich Affair."* A ponderous exegetical account of that "huge and explosive debate" among Soviet historians: was Stalin a complete military incompetent or Soviet Russia's great heroic leader during the dark days of World War II? ANTONIO CARLO, *"Trotsky and the Organization Problem."* This essay finally answers why Trotsky repudiated his *Our Political Tasks* during the Russian Revolution. An intricate polemic that unfortunately concludes with the finding that Trotsky's ideas are "still alive and relevant." C.J. ARTHUR, *"Towards a Materialist Theory of Law."* A detailed explication of E.B. Pashukanis' theories of Soviet law. This issue also includes several notes, communications, and open letters on political repression in Poland. —TL

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*This section is compiled by John Fekete, Department of English, Trent University, Peterborough, Ont., Canada. The following have contributed to the reviews appearing in this issue: David Dickens, Sandie Estanek, Dorothy Gehrke, Kermit Hummel, Harold Jordan, Tim Luke, Ray Morrow, Peter Murphy, Steven Pickers, Parviz Piran, Greg Renault, Patricia Tummons, and Susan Wheeler.

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## ENDARCH, 1:4 (Fall 1976)

Department of Political Science, Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA 30311. $5 per year (4 issues). Single copies $1.50. NZONGOLA-NTALAJA, *"The Political Situation in Southern Africa."* This article evaluates the political strategy of Kissinger and Southern Africa's white-settler rulers in light of both the recent successful liberation struggles in Mozambique and Angola and the ongoing struggles in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Namibia (South West Africa). This strategy is viewed as a form of detente in which black "moderates" who comprise a kind of "aristocracy of labor" are promoted and in which black African states are offered "aid"—thereby neutralizing the liberation movements, maintaining the present balance of power in the region, and preserving the interests of Western capitalism. MANNING MARABLE, *"Violence in a Dying Culture."* An attempt to demonstrate the sense in which violence is a central characteristic of contemporary American culture and politics. The mass "cultural apparatus" is seen as the primary arena of social control, while legitimation is provided by a state apparatus deploring all forms of violence except its own—which is either legalized or kept from public view. The upshot of this is to indicate that American culture is dying and that the cultural contradictions of capitalism (e.g., lack of innovation in culture and politics) *reflects* (!) the economic contradictions of capitalism (that remain unspecified). —HJ

## FIREWEED, Vol. 6 (Sept., 1976)

99 Dale Street, Lancaster, England. $10 per year (4 issues). Prepared in support of the British Hospital for Vietnam, this special issue, entitled *Phoenix Country*, includes short stories, poems, photographs and songs effectively depicting the struggle and destruction of the Vietnam War. —PFM

## INSURGENT SOCIOLOGIST, 6:2 (Spring 1976)

Department of Sociology, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403. $10 per year (4 issues); $6 per year low income. Single copies $3. ALAN NASSER, *"The Twilight of Capitalism: Contours of the Emerging Epoch."* Tries to explain the existing world economic crisis generated by monopoly capitalism by focusing on (1) the contradictory results of 25 years of Keynesian stimulation of a chronically recession-prone economy; (2) the destructive effects on the dollar's stability caused by the U.S.'s persistent deficit in its balance of payments; and (3) the concomitant decline of U.S. imperial hegemony and the rise of inter-imperialist rivalry. AL SZYMANSKI, *"The Socialization of Women's Oppression: A Marxist Theory of the Changing Position of Women in Advanced Capitalist Society."* Argues that capitalism is the cause of women's oppression, that the material basis of this oppression is rapidly being transferred from the family to wage labor, and that the needs of capitalism to guarantee a relatively passive, specialized, and low-paid menial wage labor force have proletarianized women. Also attempts to analyze the degree of oppression of women in different classes. STEPHEN JOHNSON, *"How The West Was Won: Last Shootout for the Yankee-Cowboy Theory."* The elite theories presented in the work of Carl Oglesby in the late 1960s, known as the Yankee-Cowboy theory, serve as the point of departure to display defense companies as the major sources of "cowboy" economic power. —PIR

## INSURGENT SOCIOLOGIST, 7:1 (Winter 1977)

*"Editorial."* The 1976 meeting of the American Sociological Association is optimistically regarded as a "watershed for radical sociology"—this despite the hilarious attempts of the League for Proletarian Socialism (later termed, in the "Letters" section, the "League for Putsch-y Sectarianism") to dominate the panel debate on Marxist theory; despite the poor showing at hearings on the Nyden case; and despite the dismaying lack of concern to challenge Coleman's "racism." JOHN HORTON, FARI FILSOUFI, *"Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder in Theory and Method."* An incompetent structuralist recycling of Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism* and *What Is to Be Done?* is the take-off point for a tirade against the "subjectivism" (sic) of such "left-wing" representatives as Lukacs and Korsch! The recent re-emergence of "leftism" in the fragmentary remains of the New Left is traced to the lack of a mass-based M-L party "opposed to doctrinaire factions" that would otherwise keep the left in line. LAURENCE SHOUP, *"The Council on Foreign Relations and American Policy in Southeast Asia, 1940-1973."* Relates U.S. involvement there to the recommendations of this private group, composed of representatives from large capital (Chase Manhattan Bank, Morgan Trust, etc.) and from the "Social Register." JOACHIM ISRAEL, *"From Level of Aspiration to Dissonance or What the Petty-bourgeoisie Worries About."* Attempts to locate the roots of social psychology as

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a discipline in the extension to the middle classes of that alienation and reification suffered for so long by the working class. The uncritical acceptance by bourgeois social scientists of "possessive individualism" accounts for their failure to question these roots. ELI ZARETSKY, *"Capitalism and Nostalgia: Review of Jacoby's* Social Amnesia." Reification, Zaretsky argues, is not as pervasive as Jacoby implies. Thus, while he can understand Jacoby's "despair," it can be overcome through political involvement. K.P. MOSELEY, *"Population and History."* Review essay of *Poverty and Progress,* by R.G. Wilkinson. AL SZYMANSKI, *"The Practice of Marxist Social Science."* After indicting all manner of "radical" approaches (other than his own variety of Marx-Lenin-Mao-ism), Szymanski has the cheek to call for a united front of "radical" academics of all hues in order to develop the progressive Marxist theory necessary to aid the proletariat's struggle against capitalism. G. WILLIAM DOMHOFF, *"The Ruling Class and the Women's Page."* Argues that this newspaper feature is a rich source documenting the interconnections that still exist among members of the "ruling class." MARTIN OPPENHEIMER, *"Social Control Mechanisms in the Federal Republic of Germany."* A description of *Berufsverbot*—i.e., the denial of public employment to those suspected of activities or ideas even mildly threatening to the West German state. JOHN HARDESTY, *"Further Observations on 'A Better than Average Grading System'."* *"Update on Paul Nyden."* ALFRED McC. LEE, *"The Nyden Case: An Alumnus Revisits Pitt."* Plus more book reviews and letters. —PT

## INSURGENT SOCIOLOGIST, 7:2 (Spring 1977)

This special issue on "Imperialism and the State" could more appropriately be subtitled: Godzilla meets King Kong. For in it, just as in that Japanese horror movie of the 1950s, two prehistoric monsters meet to do battle to the death. The third-world perspective (identified largely with the work developed over the years by the *Monthly Review* circle) is confronted with the *Insurgent Sociologist's* own uncritical brand of proletarianism. In other words, the attempt by the "third-worlders" to locate the future sources of revolutionary change in underdeveloped countries is regarded as a slur on the metropole's native workers' abilities to also engage in revolutionary class struggle. The third world, in this view, becomes important only inasmuch as its struggles help or hinder the cause of the working class. Hence, IRA GERSTEIN's *"Theories of the World Economy and Imperialism"* weighs the relative merits of Wallerstein, Amin, Palloix and Poulantzas on the basis of the respective abilities of their theories to vindicate revolutionary class struggle on a world scale. AL SZYMANSKI's *"Capital Accumulation on a World Scale and the Necessity of Imperialism"* is similarly designed to show that the view of imperialism as a *necessary* accompaniment to capitalist development has, as one of its more significant outcomes, the effect of justifying the view that *all* third-world struggles against imperialism are thus also against capitalism. This view, of course, is not tenable, but, as Magdoff is quick to point out, neither is it the view of Szymanski's self-proclaimed enemies. In effect, Szymanski's arguments have the structural force of a house of cards that, when confronted with the small gusts of hot air from Magdoff, collapses upon itself. (HARRY MAGDOFF's devastating reply to Szymanski, *"How to Make a Molehill out of a Mountain,"* is easily the high point of the issue.) The third major theoretical piece is JOHN EVANSOHN, *"Workers and Imperialism: Where Is the Aristocracy of Labor?"* Nowhere, evidently, as the thrust of this article is to show that workers in the first sector are really not at all privileged with respect to those in the third sector. Thus, they can still be regarded as the unspoiled, unembourgeoisified saviors of the world for socialism. SAMIR AMIN's *"Comment on Gerstein,"* IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN's *"How Do We Know Class Struggle When We See It?,"* and Magdoff's already mentioned response, are the only challenges to this kind of nonsense. Unfortunately, none of these really brings us out of the theoretical ice-age that forms the backdrop of this confrontation. None of these leads out of the fundamental view that structural changes are the determining forces for any revolutionary development. The working class is regarded on all sides as an object which, under proper circumstances, will exhibit lawfully determined behavior. It is no accident that Poulantzas, Althusser and Balibar are the theoretical heroes in this encounter, for their variety of structuralist "science" is one of the few still around that precludes any active role for human subjectivity. The simple fact that the "working class" is so unproblematically assumed by all the authors concerned is itself eloquent testimony to the lack of any element of critical thinking in this discussion. And more's the pity, since, after all is said and done, the basic issue of changed relations between the metropolis and the third world is still an important one. Other articles in this issue: MARIA PATRICIA FERNANDEZ KELLY, *"Dos Santos and Poulantzas on Fascism, Imperialism and the State,"* PATRICK CLAWSON, *"The Internationalization of Capital and Capital Accumulation in Iran and Iraq,"* THOMAS BAMAT, *"Relative State Autonomy and Capitalism*

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*in Brazil and Peru,"* ELLEN KAY TRIMBERGER, *"State Power and Modes of Production: Implications of the Japanese Transition to Capitalism,"* and Review Essays: ALEX DUPUY and PAUL FITZGERALD on Wallerstein's *The Modern World-System* and NIGEL DISNEY on Amin's *Accumulation on a World Scale.* —PT

## KURSBUCH, No. 43 (March, 1976)

Potsdamer Strasse 98, 1 Berlin 30. 8 DM. Issue theme: "Arbeitsorganisation—Ende des Taylorismus?" ANDRE HERON, *"Der Taylorismus. Grundsätze, Methoden, Doktrin."* A summary of Taylor's doctrines. RICHARD VAHRENKAMF, *"Taylors Lehren—ein Mittelklassentraum."* Taylor's system (based on the model of handwork and basic commodity industries rather than the assembly-oriented mass production systems pioneered by Ford, who ignored Taylorism) and its ideological appeal to certain types of small industry and frustrated middle class "experts" is regarded as anachronistic. MARIANNE HERZOG, *"Als Akkordarbeiterin in der Metallindustrie: Im Sommer 1975 mitten in der Krise."* Notes on piecework that document the rather simple methods of workers' control. KURT AUMEIER, *"Im Grossraumbüro."* A case study of how the move to an open-area work space has enhanced control of technical salaried workers and made them more aware of their lack of autonomy. REIMAR BIRKWALD, *"Ueber die gewerkschaftlichen Ideen zur Humanisierung: Ein Gespräch mit dem Tarifexperten der IG Metall."* A typical pragmatic union official view. RAINER DOMBOIS, MICHAEL SCHUMANN, *"Mindestnormen als Humanisierung: Ueberlegungen zu einem Konzept gewerkschaftlicher Arbeitsgestaltungspolitik."* A brief attempt to classify the types of consideration required by a concept of minimal humanization of work. JOACHIM KALKA, *"Irgendwo begannen mächtige Maschinen zu dröhnen...: Arbeit als abstrakte Exotik in der Science Fiction."* A provocative examination of the question why science fiction systematically avoids the description of work and more generally of everyday life. HELLMUT G. HAASIS, *"Fiat—Legende und Wirklichkeit: Humanisierung als technisches Instrument gegen die Arbeiterkämpfe."* Fiat's reorganization in the name of "humanization" is said to destroy militant work groups. HELMUT HOYER, MATTHIAS KNUTH, *"Die teilautonome Gruppe: Strategie des Kapitals oder Chance für die Arbeiter?"* A very well-researched critique of hopes placed in the system-immanent imperatives of autonomous work groups, especially under conditions of chronic unemployment. JUERGEN H. MENDER, *"Humanisierung oder Automatisierung? Zur Zukunft der kapitalistischen Arbeit."* The Volvo experiment with autonomous work groups is viewed as a profit-oriented device to gain worker complicity in a long-term project of full automation. RAINER TRAUB, *"Lenin und Taylor: Die Schicksale der 'wissenschaftlichen Arbeitsorganisation' in der (frühen) Sowjetunion."* An account of the fate of the Russian Taylorist A.K. Gastev in the context of post-revolutionary economic and educational policy. JUERGEN ARNDT, *"Im Mittelpunkt steht der Mensch: Arbeitsorganisation in der DDR."* The work sciences in East Germany are shown to legitimate an educational system designed to guarantee that no one has more abilities than are required for his actual work. PAUL PARIN, *"Zuschauen bei der Arbeit in der Volksrepublik China."* Notes of a tourist trying to make sense out of the nature of work in China, especially its seemingly leisurely pace. ROLF SCHWENDTER, *"Produktionseinheit Föhrenwald: Impressionen aus dem Jahre 2043."* Futurological fantasy of a janitor's work in a fully pluralistic socialist society. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* survives as a satire magazine. —RM

## KURSBUCH, No. 45 (Sept., 1976)

Issue theme: "We Petty-Bourgeoisie" (*Wir Kleinbürger*). HANS MAGNUS ENZENSBERGER, *"Von der Unaufhaltsamkeit des Kleinbürgertums. Eine soziologische Grille."* A translation of this appears in *Telos* 30. KARL MARKUS MICHEL, *"Wir Ueberbauarbeiter. Ein Brief über mich und Meinesgleichen."* Explores the origins of the petty-bourgeois dream of the "Peaceable Kingdom," and comments that when communication is grounded in subjectivity rather than in roles and functions, further change can be thought about. ALFRED KROVOZA, AXEL OESTMANN, *"Kleinbürger in Deutschland. Soziale und politische Konturen einer 'verhinderten Klasse'."* An attempt to situate the petty-bourgeoisie in history and to set up the everyday as the real stomping ground of that class. MICHAEL MOLSNER, *"Von uns aus gehen."* KARIN RESCHKE, *"Liebe macht blind."* BERND ALEXANDER, *"Morgens um sechs Uhr ist die Welt nicht in Ordnung. Vom kleinen Angestellten zum aufgeweckten Kleinbürger."* A day in the life of a petty-bourgeois, complete with self-reflection in the form of Roquintin's mirror of *Nausea* fame. ANJA JOVIC, *"Die 'alte' Welt, die 'neue' Welt."* On the trials and tribulations of being a petty-bourgeois. OSKAR SAHLBERG, *"Kleinbürger, Jahrgang 1933, von innen."* A look at

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Nazism as the 'return of the repressed'—illustrated with clinical accounts and an analysis of them. PAUL PARIN, *"Die hoffnungsvolle Kindheit und das gefährliche Leben des Kleinbürgers. Eine ethnologisch-psychoanalytische Betrachtung."* BRIGITTE WORMBS, *"Wem Gott will rechte Gunst erweisen..."* Considers 'Nature' from the splendid possibilities found in the travel magazines of the time to the people who read them—i.e., the petty-bourgeoisie—to the vision of a 'return to nature' via a totally planned and artificial route. URS JAEGGI, *"Zwischen den Mühlsteinen. Der Kleinbürger oder die Angst von der Geschichte."* HEINZ-GERHARD HAUPT, *"Die 'schwankende Klasse.' Zur Bedeutung des Kleinbürgertums für die Arbeiterbewegung am Beispiel der Pariser Commune."* Assesses the importance of the petty-bourgeoisie for the workers' movement. The point is to show that the former can move to the right or left and that the politics of the workers' movement can be strengthened by a theory which takes account of these possibilities. But it fails to inquire whether there is, indeed, any workers' movement with which the petty-bourgeoisie can ally itself. —LDB

## LIBERATION, 20:1 (Fall 1976)

186 Hampshire St., Cambridge, MA 02139. $10 per year (9 issues). JAN EDWARDS, MICHAEL NILL, *"Tracts for Our Times."* A reprint of the 1956 essay, together with short tracts written in 1976, marking the journal's 20th anniversary issue. The threat of nuclear destruction, the power of the state, technology and industrialization, and the personal versus the political are some of the themes that bridge the 20-year time span. TOM NAIRN, *"Ireland: Rearguard or Vanguard?"* In the absence of a resurgence of dynamic capitalist growth or the possibility of socialist development, regional conflicts are inevitable and Northern Ireland may be a signpost of the future for Europe. The Protestant community is not a "real" one, and can be dismissed from history as a "white settler" or colonialist minority. Although the Protestant community is more proletarianized than the rest of Ireland, Nairn saves his categories of analysis by diagnosing it as a case of false consciousness. Their real interest lies in an all-Ireland movement of national liberation from British control. MARTHA GOLD, *"The Dialectics of Astrology."* Astrology and other holistic systems considered irrational and subjective by the scientific community are presented here as an attack on the consolidation of technical and scientific power in the hands of a ruling class. As a way of seeing ourselves as whole, interrelated, capable of self-maintenance, self-knowledge and self-transformation, astrology challenges and could help to mend the Cartesian split between mind and matter. PEGGY ROSENTHAL, *"On Documentary."* Examines some of the contradictions and paradoxes of documentary films: an art form that pretends to give no form to reality; controlled, scripted "spontaneity," the "unobtrusiveness" of bulky, obvious film equipment, the filming of events themselves staged (lectures, discussion groups, concerts, etc.), the presentation of an edited reality. Plus reviews of books and films. —SEW

## LIBERATION, 20:2 (Jan.-Feb., 1977)

NANCY HENLEY, *"Body Politics."* An analysis of non-verbal expression as the micropolitical structure of our everyday experience that supports the political-economic structure that in turn determines our everyday life. ALEC DUBRO, *"Methadone is not a Government Plot."* Defends government-operated methadone programs against criticisms from the left. KAREN LINDSEY, *"Do Women Have Class?"* Though recognizing that class has broken down as a meaningful category (into income, status, authority, etc.), Lindsey nonetheless chooses income stratification as her touchstone, and thus reduces oppression to income inequality and revolution to redistribution. But she nonetheless concludes that class is not the only measure of power or oppression. PETER BATES, *"Politics, Poetry and Prophets."* Robert Bly's public, political, and artistic development from the late 1950s to the present. Plus reviews of books and films. —SEW

## NEUES FORUM, No. 263-264 (Nov.-Dec., 1975)

Museumstrasse 5, Vienna A-1070, Austria. 6.50 DM. Reports on Portugal from ALMEIDA, FREY, SIEGERT, PATER MAX. Discussions of the changing role of the state by BEHNKE, ABENDROTH. Essays by NENNING, GEYRHOFER, PATAKI. Reviews. —RM

## NEUES FORUM, No. 265-266 (Jan.-Feb., 1976)

Commentary on the SPD Parteitag by GEYRHOFER, WIECZOREK-ZEUL. Further discussion on Portugal by FREY and NENNING. Reflections on philosophy from SARTRE and HELMS. Reviews. —RM

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**NEUES FORUM**, No. 267 (March, 1976)

Commentary on the SPÖ Parteitag by KREISKY, NENNING and MATZNER. Exchanges from HERRMANN, GLOTZ, the FOCUS-KOLLEKTIV, and PRADER on the theme of social democracy and social partnership. Reviews. —RM

**NEUES FORUM**, No. 268 (April, 1976)

A series of articles on the Austrian Slav minority group problem. Homosexuals present their case and problems in a series of discussions. ANDREAS BURO and GUENTER DILL, *"Von Thieu zu Ho (Vietnameische Revolution II. Teil)."* Reviews. —RM

**NEUES FORUM**, No. 269-270 (May-June, 1976)

Excerpts from the self-defense of Peter Paul Zahl, a West German radical and writer whose sentence for unintentionally wounding a policeman was raised from 4 to 15 years by a politically motivated higher court. Section on "Lumpenreformismus." Excerpts from *Forum* editor GUENTHER NENNING's new book, *Realisten oder Verräter: Ueber die Zukunft der Sozialdemokratie*. This provocative pragmatic appeal for "Marx, der Sozialdemokrat"—e.g., a non-violent theory of revolution—by a leading popularizer of the post-war "left-wing" version of Austro-socialism deserves a wide audience and a critical response. On the basis of an intentionally iconoclastic attack on the New Left, of which he is a part, Nenning denounces the model of armed revolutionary rebellion as an obstacle for advanced democratic societies and as an inducement to fascist resistance. The New Left is accused of having confused (anarchistically, romantically) Third World and advanced capitalist struggles, thus ignoring the social democratic theory of transition which can be documented in Marx and Engels. "Activistic Marxism" (Che) is contrasted to "objective Marxism" (Popper) adequate to social democracy: while revolution cannot be made arbitrarily, it must nevertheless be made. As a reply to the deformed "revolutionary" practices of the neo-orthodox West German New Left, this attack on the abuse of revolutionary jargon cannot be ignored, but as a reply to the theoretical pessimism of Critical Theory, especially in its new ecological extensions, it cannot be accepted without a deeper theoretical foundation than Nenning is prepared to provide. HEIDI PATAKI, *"Das verflixte 7. Jahr."* A report on the Juso (Young Socialist) Congress in Dortmund which underscores the continuing impotence and increasing irrelevance of this group as a loyal opposition in the SPD and anticipates, in the wake of Strauss' withdrawal from the CDU, a future splinter party to the left representing left-wing critical intelligence as an interest group in alliance with the working class and a European popular front. DETLEV ALBERS, ERHARD STAMMBERGER, KURT WAND, *"Blauer Himmel über der Marktwirtschaft: Kritik am 'Orientierungsrahmen '85' der SPD."* Reports and documents on the women's movement, including an account of the March 1976 Tribunal on "Force Against Women" held in Brussels. More reports on Portugal. Reviews. —RM

**NEW LEFT REVIEW**, No. 99 (Sept.-Oct., 1976)

7 Carlisle St., London W1V 6NL. $16 per year. GUENTER MINNERUP, *"West Germany since the War."* In an interpretation of political history since 1948, grounded in the logic of class structures, the labor movement is described through (1) its integration since 1949 into the system of capitalism and bourgeois democracy and (2) its alienation from "its Marxist tradition." ANTHONY BARNETT, *"Raymond Williams and Marxism: A Rejoinder to Terry Eagleton."* Eagleton is said to have misinterpreted and over-politicized Williams' work. RICHARD B. DAY, *"The Theory of the Long Cycle: Kondratiev, Trotsky, Mandel."* An examination of the "theory of waves," i.e., perspectives and interpretations on the trend of capitalist development, its dynamic, equilibrium, its turning points and periodicity. EDWARD THOMPSON, *"Romanticism, Moralism and Utopianism: The Case of William Morris."* Thompson revises his study of William Morris: a significant representation of the arguments within the Marxist tradition. FRED BLOCK, *"Communications: U.S. Imperialism."* Outlines recent developments in world economy: the decline of U.S. domination over international interactions parallels the increasing vulnerability of the capitalist world system. OSCAR BRAUN, *" 'Value' in Ricardo and Marx."* —WR

**OLAM**, Spring 1976

J.H. Gollin, editor, World Union of Jewish Students, 247 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. This new magazine's stated intent is to inform Jews of their worldwide situation, and to combat the many prejudiced half-truths that plague Jewish existence. Its contributors range from students in

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Israel and elsewhere to those who have been active in Jewish political and social issues since Israel's formation. NAHUM GOLDMANN, *"Zionism and the Arabs."* Israel's increased reliance on military might, which only mirrors Arab tactics, thus antagonizes the Israeli-Arab conflict even more. GADI YATZIV, *"My Zionism: A Reflection on First Principles."* Zionism is regarded as an individualistic philosophy that seeks to give the Jew a collective cultural unity based on Jewish traditions. MEIR PA'IL, *"The Real Threat to Israel."* Increased Zionist nationalism is feared to lead to a future image of Israel as an inflexible country that will need to increase its military expenditures even more than the present level of 50 percent of its budget, resulting in a vast cultural impoverishment and increased loss of objective reasoning. JIMOH OMO FADAKA, *"Tanzania: Tradition and Development."* Tanzania's rejection of capitalism and Marxism results in a development based on its unique culture and ecology at a pace of slow evolutionary change to socialism. JOSE A. ITSIGSOHN, *"The Jewish Communities of Latin America."* Problems of the Jewish communities in establishing an egalitarian existence in Latin America result from (1) disunity between the agrarian environment and Jewish industrial skills; (2) the view of Israel as a disruptor of Latin American culture; and (3) Israel's alliance with the U.S. J.H. GOLLIN, *"Egypt's Palestine Policies: The Origins of a Wavering Commitment."* It is vital that Egypt come through on her commitments to the Palestinians and Arabs, given the present flux of policy changes contingent upon economics and politics. JOSEPH SZELL, *"Jewish Neurosis in Hungary: A Personal Account."* A moving biographical and social account of how a Jew came to embrace his heritage, despite the aura of Jewish hatred in Hungary. DAVID LOWENFELD, *"A Futile Defense: Jewish Responses to German Anti-Semitism 1879-1914."* The tracing of the Jewish fight against anti-semitism in Germany exposes prejudice as impossible to combat, due to the non-recognition of rationality. But certain tactics on the part of the Jews can either promote or stifle the prejudice, contingent on the Jews' own passivity or activity. —SP

## OLAM, Summer-Autumn 1976

PAUL WARSZAWSKI, *"Israel, the Jews and the Third World."* The focus is on the socio-economic-political relationships between Israel, the diaspora, and the third world, with the world powers mediating these relationships. A.B. YEHOSHUA, *"A State of Seige."* Deals with the schizophrenic split in Israel's culture, torn between war and the need for cultural development. NOAH LUCAS, *"Zionism: Cause and Effect."* A history of Zionism in the 20th century and a call for ideological unity concerning Israel and the diaspora. CHRISTOPHER ROPER, *"Cacophony and Coup in Argentina."* An exposure of the military coup following Peron's death (July 1974) as one riddled with political uncertainty and military oppression. IMOGENE MARK, *"Chile—The Rise and Fall."* The Chilean military dictatorship is characterized as having links with national monopolies and multinationals. EDUARDO KAUFMAN, *"Uruguayan Autogolpe."* This depicts the change from a civil society to one of stringent military oppression, justified in the name of fighting the communists. J.H. GOLLIN, *"Nasserism and the Palestinians."* Deals with the emergence of Egyptian and inter-Arab politics and the effects this has on Israel. JAMES DORSEY, *"The Story of Les Phalanges of Lebanon."* The complicated political structure in Lebanon fosters religious disunity, an obstacle to Arab unity. IGNACIO KLICH, *"The Grounds of Land Tenure in Palestine."* Traces the European dismantling of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of Palestine. —SP

## POLITICS AND SOCIETY, 6:2 (1976)

Geron-X, Inc., Box 1108, Los Altos, CA 94022. $9.50 per year (4 issues). JEROME KARABEL, *"Revolutionary Contradictions: Antonio Gramsci and the Problem of Intellectuals."* Beginning with the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution on Gramsci's theoretical development, his position on factory councils, the party, and intellectuals is juxtaposed to Lenin's. Though Lenin is given much credit, the major theme is Gramsci's attempt to transform the participation of intellectuals in the revolutionary struggle from a necessity into a positive asset. ANDREW T. SCULL, *"The Decarceration of the Mentally Ill: A Critical View."* The primary factor behind the shift to community treatment of the mentally disturbed has been a drive to control the soaring costs of incarceration and reflects recent changes in the nature of advanced capitalist social formations. STANLEY B. GREENBERG, *"Business Enterprise in a Racial Order."* Four contemporary schools of thought (growth, adaptive, colonial, and neo-Marxist) are examined in order to resolve two fundamental questions: what are conventional business practices in nonracial settings, and how consistent are these practices with the exigencies of a racial order. Concludes that businesses have proven to be adaptive and complicit in a racial order. KAY LEHMAN SCHLOZMAN, *"Coping with the American Dream: Maintaining Self-Respect in an Achieving Society."* Based

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on an investigation of the attitudes of a working class ethnic neighborhood in Chicago, the author suggests that one way in which people find self-respect in a society that rewards extraordinary achievement is by taking great pride in their achievement of a stable and respectable way of life. Examines the implications this has for the question as to why working-class radicalism made so little headway in the U.S. —PFM

## PRAXIS, 1:2 (Winter 1976)

640 Arlington Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707. $9 per year. This second issue of a journal of radical perspectives on the arts is both larger and more substantial than its predecessor, but is hampered by an eclectic approach, with articles uneven in depth and quality. RICHARD FITZGERALD, *"The Images of Power in American Political Cartoons."* An impoverished description of political representation in selected cartoons, whose sole merit lies in the illustrations following the text. JOHN BEECHER, *"Grand Tour: 1921."* Poem. DAVID CRAIG, MICHAEL EGAN, *"The Literature of Revolution."* Schematic juxtaposition of analyses of the writing of Fedin and Solzhenitsyn with corresponding transformations in Soviet society. DON GORDON, *"Tableau Vivant."* Poem. JOHN TAGG, *"American Power and American Painting: The Development of Vanguard Painting in the U.S. since 1945."* Situates the main tradition of contemporary painting in the national and international context that conditions artistic production. Intended to counter linear, hermetic conceptions of art history, the article traces the social history of the transformation of abstract expressionism from an initial moment of aesthetic protest to one of conservative avant-garde capitalism. THOMAS McGRATH, *"Legend."* Poem. WILLIS TRUITT, SHEILA MEEHAN, *"A Note on Revolutionary Art and Ideology."* Simplistic and naive Marxist position that attempts to overcome rigid Lukácsian realism, but only reduces art to a politics itself based on a mere moral imperative for artistic commitment and solidarity. JAMES SCULLY, *"Winter Journal."* Poem. ANDREW MILNER, *"Leavis and English Literary Criticism."* Thorough analysis of Leavis' work as a totalizing system developed in response to the challenge to traditional English cultural values posed by Marxist literary criticism. Regards Leavis' central weakness to be his lack of a concept of contradiction, resulting in the abstract assertion of an ideal totality against an intransigent reality. ADOLFO SANCHEZ VASQUEZ, *"Lunacharsky: The Paradoxes of Art and Revolution."* Traces the cultural, aesthetic and pedagogic policy of the architect of the Proletkult. CHE GUEVARA, *"On Art and Revolution."* Fragments of a critique of the extremes of aestheticism and politically-derived realism. LOUIS HARAP, *"The 'Pre-Established Affinities' of Poe and Baudelaire."* Stylistic and thematic similarities in the work of Poe and Baudelaire are seen as a result of similar experiences of alienation in capitalist society, which generate a literature of exile. ROBERT SAYRE, *"Lucien Goldmann and the Sociology of Culture."* Excellent introductory survey of Goldmann's life and work. FRANK GALASSI, *"The Acquisitive Sense in American Drama."* Analysis of Boucicault's "The Octoroon" (1859), Herne's "Margaret Fleming" (1890) and Jefferson's "Rip Van Winkle" (1865). Argues that 19th century U.S. melodrama reflected an overriding concern with material acquisition. Big deal. LENORE WEISS, *"Primal Scream."* Poem. LEONARD M. HENRY, *"The Role of Filmmakers in Revolutionary Social Change."* Brief overview of filmmaking under conditions of capitalist monopoly; Soviet, Cuban and Vietnamese post-revolutionary socialism; the Third World; and radical Western alternatives. Points toward a rising cohesiveness among oppositional filmmakers. CHRISTER THEMPTANDER, *"Photomontages."* JEAN CASSOU, *"Understanding and Misunderstanding Culture."* MANNA PERPELITT, *"When Will I Hear the Music?"* Poem. C.J. BULLOCK, *"On the Marxist Criticism of the Contemporary Novel in the U.S.: A Re-evaluation of Saul Bellow."* Dogmatic application of Lukács' critique of modernism to the metaphysical assumption of modern U.S. academic literary criticism, through analysis of Bellow's fictional technique, his informing metaphysic, and the general social context. DAVID KUNZLE, *"The Worker as Mythic Hero: 'The Ankles of Juan'."* Introduction to the following comic book selection situates it in the mass culture program of Allende's Popular Unity government. *"The Ankles of Juan."* Cartoon story. UMBERTO ECO, *"Literary Fashions: The Superman Thief."* Traces ambiguity in the image of Arsene Lupin. Plus reviews. —GR

## QUEST: A FEMINIST QUARTERLY, 3:2 (Fall 1976)

P.O. Box 8843, Washington, DC 20003. $9 per year (4 issues). Special issue on Communications and Control. ALEXA FREEMAN, VALLE JONES, *"Creating Feminist Communications."* The goals and principles of feminist media. SHERI MAEDA, MOIRA RANKIN, NATALIE REUSS, *"Mayday Mayday."* The development of radio broadcasting as a form of patriarchal

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consciousness control and the possibilities for feminist broadcasting. DEB FRIEDMAN, LOIS YANKOWSKI, *"Snuffing Sexual Violence."* The problem of free speech vs. censorship in the face of the growing tide of violent sexual abuse among women. The ultimate goal is access to the media. CRITIQUE AND COMMENTARY, *"The Female Journalism Debate."* Discussion about the role of publications in the women's movement: standards of excellence and how best to contribute to feminist struggle. CHARLOTTE BUNCH, *"Women Make Movies."* Interview with Women Make Movies, a group involved in film production and distribution and in educating women in the technical skills of filmmaking. NELLIE MORTON, *"How Images Function."* A discussion of the power of images and the process of image formation, by way of an examination of the abortion issue. CHRIS MURPHEY, *"The Shadow Box."* Television as patriarchal hypnotist. DANIELA GIOSEFFI, ESTHER SWARTZ, *"Lifting the Veil of Isis."* Belly dancing as a sacred birth ritual. SHERI MAEDA, JILL SHAPIRO, *"Put Another Nickel In."* The plight of female performers in the music industry. —SEW

## RADICAL AMERICA, 10:5 (Sept.-Oct., 1976)

P.O. Box BN, Cambridge, MA 02104. $8 per year (4 issues). STAUGHTON LYND, *"Workers Control in a Time of Diminished Workers' Rights."* One important strategy of the Nixon court has been to strengthen the power of unions over workers, in part through attempting to make unions legally responsible for the enforcement of contracts while stripping workers of many of their rights. Outlines a variety of legal and shop-floor strategies pursued by workers to widen their control over their jobs, lessen management prerogatives, and return workers' representation to the shop-floor. DODEE FENNELL, *"Beneath the Surface: The Life of a Factory."* This oral history of a small electrical manufacturing plant reconstructs the collective experience of a group of workers as the factory changed from a small, paternalistic establishment, characteristic of the early stages of industrialism, into part of a giant conglomerate. EDWARD GREER, *"Racism and U.S. Steel, 1906-1974."* Attacking the claim that racial discrimination is supported by the backward sections of the capitalist class, abetted by local interests and the aristocracy of white labor, it is shown that the consistent practice of at least one corporate giant has been to invent, reinforce and maintain racial divisions among its workers. The company not only benefits from paying lower wages to black workers, but has been conscious of the importance of race divisions in maintaining management's control over production against the united action of workers. Plus a review of Berger and Mohr, *A Seventh Man.* —PFM

## RADICAL PHILOSOPHERS' NEWSJOURNAL, No. 7 (August, 1976)

12 Dartmouth St., Somerville, MA 02145. $4 per year (3 issues). KAI NIELSEN, *"The Political Relevance of Habermas."* Primarily concerned with Goran Therborn's interpretation of Habermas, an attempt is made to determine if Habermas' critical theory is actually subversive. In a final expression of his ambivalence about the argument between Habermas and his more orthodox Marxist critics, Nielsen criticizes Habermas' overemphasis on ideational factors and his neglect of the class struggle. ROGER GOTTLIEB, *"Nielsen and the Role of the Revolutionary Intellectual."* Criticizes Nielsen's defense of Habermas and the Frankfurt School, who have neither a specific political position nor any relation to a revolutionary party. Attempts to show how Nielsen's position is based on a mistaken conception of the relations between intellectuals and revolutionary organizations. KEN MEGILL, *"Loneliness and Solidarity."* Megill describes the industrialization process now underway in the academic world and some of the basic assumptions of the work style in the modern university. Using the University of Berlin as an example, he shows that some of its underlying principles—particularly the principles of the loneliness and freedom of the individual scholar—are no longer adequate for today's universities. LAWRENCE ELLE, *"Comment on Megill."* KATHRYN PINE PARSONS, DAVID OZAR, *"A Sample Course in Morality and Medicine."* —PFM

## RADICAL RELIGION, 3:2 (1977)

P.O. Box 9164, Berkeley, CA 94709. $7 per year (4 issues). Single copies $2. Issue theme: Feminism and Socialism. SHEILA COLLINS, *"Historical Turning Point: Feminism and Socialism."* The proletarianization of women is viewed as the foundation for the merger of socialist and feminist perspectives—with the socialist perspective understood as the consciousness of the working class. The author predicts a coordinated attempt by government and industry to shoo women back into the home, given the continued increase in the unemployment rate, but this will ultimately prove ineffective. All this is related to the need to develop a radical theology to locate the economic, political, cultural—as well as the usual spiritual—"conditions for

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transcendence." MICHELE RUSSELL, *"Slave Codes and Liner Notes: Black Women in the U.S."* An analysis of black women blues singers, with admittedly no conclusion, "only the reminder that the beat goes on." DOROTHEE SOELLE, *"Remembering Christ: Faith, Theology and Liberation."* A completely off-the-wall account of the use-value (in a purportedly "Marxist" sense) of religion properly understood. "To abolish religion," the author claims, "would simply make human beings even less able to speak out." SUZAN E. HILL, *"The Woman's Bible: Reformulating Tradition."* Analyzes the authors of the 19th century Woman's Bible in light of the suffrage movement as well as post-Civil War society in general. NIKI LANG, *"An Interview with Olga Talamante,"* a radical chicana recently released from an Argentine prison. OLIVE P. HACKETT, *"Women and the Health Care System."* The move among certain women to "reappropriate" their bodies through medical self-examination is hailed as nothing short of a breakthrough in patriarchal barriers. *"Lesbians and Politics: A Group Discussion."* JEANNE GROSS, *"Feminist Ethics from a Marxist Perspective."* The point of this article seems to lie mainly in refuting feminist demands for separatism. R. BAXANDALL, E. EWEN, L. GORDON, *"Review of Braverman's* Labor and Monopoly Capital*."* Reprinted from *Monthly Review*, this argues that Braverman's book fails to take account of the reliance of the capitalist division of labor on a pre-existing sexual division of labor. MARLENE DIXON's counter-review of the same book defends Braverman against the attacks of those so-called feminists who are preoccupied with "the psychological oppression of petty-bourgeois housewives, to the exclusion of any genuine class understanding." Plus more reviews and poetry. —PT

## REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST, No. 5 (November, 1976)

Published by the Revolutionary Communist Group, 49 Railton Road, London SE24 0LN. 2 pounds for U.K. subscriptions, 3 pounds elsewhere (4 issues). Single copies .50 pound. The major focus of this issue is on women under capitalism. OLIVIA ADAMSON, CAROL BROWN, JUDITH HARRISON, JUDY PRICE, *"Women's Oppression under Capitalism."* An attempt to formulate an encyclopedic account of the situation of women under capitalism. In the Revolutionary Communist Group's attempt to be more Catholic (Marxist) than the Pope (the Communist Party of Great Britain, from which they broke off—or were thrown out—several years back), the authors take pains to point out how the CPGB's endorsement of "shared" domestic *work* (finely distinguished from the erroneous term *labor*) is ultimately a concession to revisionism. This is, of course, contrasted to their own uncompromising position that all domestic work must be socialized—i.e., become social labor and thus no longer be domestic work at all! It is bad enough that women have been saddled with this thankless task for lo these many centuries; why make things worse by insisting that men suffer it as well? Thus, women must wait for the revolution to remove from them the burden of housework, since capitalism is proven here unable to carry out the full socialization that is the prerequisite for this. The level of the discussion is piteously low. Just when it seems that the leftist women's movement is beginning to emerge from years of fruitless debate over the question whether or not housework is productive or unproductive of surplus value, the RCG takes up the question again, at a level of dogmatism and misogyny that has seldom been so blatant. The remainder of this issue is devoted to South Africa: DORCAS GOOD, MICHAEL WILLIAMS, *"South Africa: The Crisis in Britain and the Apartheid Economy,"* and DAVID YAFFE, *"South Africa: International Solidarity and the British Working Class."* —PT

## SALMAGUNDI, No. 36 (Winter 1977)

Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. $6 per year. CHRISTOPHER LASCH, *"The Waning of Private Life."* Criticizes sociological explanations of the development of the family in terms of the increasing specialization of the family's functions. Lasch draws out the psychological and political implications of the dissolution of aspects of the modern family as an instrument of socialization. PETER GAY, *"Aimez-vous Brahms? Reflections on Modernism."* An informed history of Brahms' reception by European publics serves as an argument for the need to re-examine the history of modern high culture which has previously been viewed as developing out of an irrevocable split between the avant-garde and the Academic Establishment and between creativity and tradition. MYRA JEHLEN, *"New World Epics: The Novel and the Middle Class in America."* Argues that the prevalent "lack of sociability" in American fiction may be explained by the specificity of America's world view and of American middle-class hegemony. Jehlen's understanding of the American ideologies of liberalism and individualism as embodied in literature draws on Lukács, Gramsci, and Raymond Williams. RUDOLF ARNHEIM,

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*"Symbols in Architecture."* In the context of a semantic theory of architecture which classifies buildings' visual messages as functional and ideological, Arnheim suggests that the architectural symbolism is a privileged means to express the "nobility" of practical life and "to revive our weakened experience" of the modern world. SUSAN BUCK-MORSS, *"T. W. Adorno and the Dilemma of Bourgeois Philosophy."* A remarkably clear and concise introductory essay discussing issues raised by Adorno's dialogues with various philosophies. ALAN SPIEGEL, *"The Kubrick Case."* Assesses Kubrick's career in commercial cinema as one of "creative independence." GERALD GRAF, *"Radicalizing English."* Review of Ohmann's *English in America.* Demolishes Ohmann's thesis that English as taught in college composition courses is indoctrination "essential to the technostructure" by taking to task Ohmann's anachronistic leftist clichés that "do his thinking for him" and his obsolescent economic and social theory. In criticizing the thesis of the hegemony of modern high culture and the modishness of cultural avant-gardes, Graf argues the necessity of a new radical cultural theory. ADRIAN KUZMINSKI, *"The Philosopher's Burden."* An unduly harsh review of Ricoeur's *The Conflict of Interpretations.* RICHARD VINE, *"The Language that Saves."* RICHARD KING, *"Faulkner and Freud."* JOAN HUTTON LANDIS, *"The Poems of Louis Glück."* PAUL ROBINSON, *"Reviewing Freud."* JAMES KIEHL, *"Reviewing Reviews."* Review essays. —DG

## SCIENCE AND SOCIETY, 40:3 (Fall 1976)

Room 4331, John Jay College, CUNY, 445 W. 59th St., New York, NY 10019. PHILIP S. FONER, *"The French Trade Union Delegation to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, 1876."* An historical account of how the French trade unionists valiantly stood in for the American labor movement at the American centennial exposition. MARVIN L. MICHAEL KAY, LORIN LEE CARY, *"The Planters Suffer Little or Nothing: North Carolina Compensations for Executed Slaves."* An attack on Fogel and Engermann's arguments upholding the economic rationality of slave production in the American South. The authors discuss how slave owners were compensated for the loss of their slaves when the latter were executed or imprisoned for criminal activity. MAKOTO ITOH, *"A Study of Marx's Theory of Value."* Another positivistic visit to that eternal well of truth, the Marxian theory of surplus value. For the most part, the visit unintentionally reveals once again that the well is dry with the dust of pre-historic economics. LOUIS HARAP, *"The Marxist Aesthetic of Stefan Morawski."* ANNETTE RUBINSTEIN, *"A Note on American Literary Independence."* —TL

## SIGNS: JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY, 2:1 (Fall 1976)

University of Chicago Press, 5801 Ellis Ave., Chicago, IL 60637. PAUL ROPP, *"The Seeds of Change: Reflections on the Condition of Women in the Early and Mid Ch'ing."* Surveys the indigenous currents stimulating changes in women's position in China without the influence of Western enlightenment. The impetus took the form of social criticism in 16th, 17th, and 18th century literature by male members of the intelligentsia, who saw broader social evils in the oppression of women. Ropp interprets feminism as part of a new democratic thought—the cultural correlate of the economic development of the Ming and the Ch'ing periods signalling the collapse of feudal morality. This is accompanied by a sour-grapes explanation locating the origins of the new wave in frustrated, downwardly-mobile upper class scholars who used literature to vent their loss of allegiance to the dominant culture. One wonders about the extent to which the Confucianist forms of cultural oppression permeated the lower classes and the peasantry; the modifications, if any, in the face of economic conditions that could not support idle, helpless but beautiful women; and the actual impact of critical literature on the cultural hegemony of Neo-Confucianism. IRENE EBER, *"The Images of Women in Recent Chinese Fiction."* Despite women's increased role in production and an insistence on performing tasks other than traditional ones, the uncomfortable visions of women competing with men and of women abandoning housework and child-care to serve the revolution have produced literary themes in which women fulfill various roles with equal, though unobtrusive, competence, while dutifully taking second place to men. LYDIA KING, *"Factory Work and Women in Taiwan: Changes in Self-Images and Status."* Paid labor in a highly patriarchal culture does not necessarily have a liberating function as is often assumed. MARY SHERIDAN, *"Young Women Leaders."* Case studies illustrate how the correct ideology can transform repetitive, arduous and mind-stifling factory work into work that engenders a sense of larger participation and wider social meaning for five women. These women in turn serve a political function in becoming models for others. PHYLLIS ANDORS, *"The Politics of Chinese Development: The Case of Women, 1960-1966."* An analysis of the relation between broader government policies toward

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economic development and the uneven integration of women. The effect of women's participation in the economy falls far short of challenging male dominance in the prevailing social attitudes and organizations. *Review Essays in the Social Sciences.* REESA VAUGHTER for psychology, JANE JAQUETTE for political science, HELENA LOPATA for sociology, CAROL JUSENIUS for economics. Four programmatic essays oriented toward reversing sexism in these disciplines. T. HAREVEN, *"Modernization and Family History: Perspective on Social Change."* G. SCHNEIDLER, G. WINDHOLZ, *"Sex Roles and the Subjective: A Cross-Cultural Test."* A. WONG, *"Women in Singapore."* —SME

## SIGNS, 2:2 (Winter 1976)

Contains several articles on sociological research into physical problems specific to women (i.e., the syndrome of starving oneself to fit social stereotypes of beauty, and the use of drugs during pregnancy) plus a sociology of skid row women, in addition to regular features. A debate on the merits of Evelyn Reed's *Woman's Evolution* continues. Of particular interest in this issue is the section "Women and Religion." ELAINE PAGELS, *"What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity,"* gives an account of an entire renegade tradition in early Christian thought that posited the Trinity as God the Father, God the Mother and God the Son. In this agnostic tradition, the Spirit was Wisdom, the maternal moment of the Godhead. This tradition was lost as the masculine domination of Catholic orthodoxy was solidified in the first three centuries A.D. A paramount issue facing feminist political theory is the relation of women to nature. The link of women to nature through childbearing has historically been used as a tool to oppress women by keeping them in their 'natural' place. However, it has been rightly pointed out that for women to deny the woman-nature connection out of hand would sacrifice an important potential for women's self-definition and fulfillment. This issue is explored through a discussion of Margaret Atwood's novel *Surfacing* by CAROL P. CHRIST and JUDITH PLASKOW, with a reply from Atwood. —SME

## SOCIALIST REVOLUTION, No. 32 (March-April, 1977)

396 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114. $10 per year (6 issues). JOHN JUDIS, ALAN WOLF, *"American Politics at the Crossroads: The Collapse of Cold-War Liberalism."* A historical picture of 'Cold-War Liberalism' from the late 1940s to Jimmy Carter. Orthodox Marxist categories are domesticated—the proletariat is now the working class; the impending collapse of the capitalist system is now the problem of the Carter administration; the seizure of state power is now the anti-corporate movement. Theoretical problems give way to strategy. HARRY BOYTE, *"The Populist Challenge: Anatomy of an Emerging Movement;"* MICHAEL ROTKIN, *"Populist Insurgency and Socialist Submersion: A Response to Boyte;"* HARRY C. BOYTE, *"The Historical Left and the Work Ahead: A Reply to Rotkin."* Boyte argues for the alliance of socialist forces and the new "citizen action movement." The Marxist tradition is needed for its "internationalism, theoretical sophistication, and historic experience." The new sorts of populist movements—e.g., the Nader group—are needed for "skills, political realism, and organizational insight." According to Rotkin, however, "in even the most difficult of times, socialists must maintain the integrity of explicitly socialist organizations independent from mass organizations that have not *explicitly* broken from their orbit within bourgeois hegemony." Boyte replies that a popular front strategy like that of the CP in the 1930s seems more promising now because capitalism is on the defensive. What is most noticeable about this whole discussion is the way that everything gets instrumentalized within a strategic framework. A stress on democratic language, for example, is said to be important because it works better! ELLIOTT CURRIE, *"The Politics of Jobs: Humphrey-Hawkins and the Dilemmas of Full Employment."* The rise and fall of the Humphrey-Hawkins bill from one aimed at full employment to a regressive measure aimed at lowering wage standards is taken as testimony that the attempt to create full employment at living wages "within the confines of the traditional corporate-labor consensus is illusory." KACK STONE, *"Prison Industries: An Elementary Form of Capitalist Production."* A look at the prison experience as a lesson in capitalist relations. JACK METZGAR, *"Mayor Daley and the Working Class."* A review of *Clout: Mayor Daley and his City,* by Len O'Conner that looks at the complexities involved in Daley's rise to power from working class origins. E.K. HUNT, *"Socialism and the Nature of Soviet Societ."* A review of *Restoration of Capitalism in the USSR* by Martin Nicolaus. Hunt argues against the Maoist 're-emergence of capitalism' thesis, but gets so involved in trying to show that the means of production are socialized that his final point—that socialization of the means of production is not enough—is left hanging. —LDB

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**THEORY AND SOCIETY**, 3:4 (Winter 1976-77)

Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co., Box 330, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. $15 per year (4 issues). IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN, *"Semi-Peripheral Countries and the Contemporary World Crisis."* Maintains that the capitalist world economy is now in a crisis and examines the consequences of this for the semi-peripheral countries and revolutionary socialist countries throughout the world. Only a few semi-peripheral countries can take advantage of this, and then only at the expense of others, which is not "development" but the successful expropriation of world surplus. For the semi-peripheral socialist nations, which do not aspire to the "dog-eat-dog" workings of capitalism, there arises a new set of problems centering around the "red vs. expert" issue. The possibility for the development of a world socialist system depends on a great political effort rooted in the semi-proletarianized segments of the working classes. PAUL PICCONE, *"Gramsci's Marxism: Beyond Lenin and Togliatti."* Argues that Gramsci's Marxism provides a strategy for social transformation in fully industrialized societies. Since both the historical content as well as the Western tradition of emancipation to be fulfilled are constantly being developed, Marxist methodology for Gramsci is subjective and cannot be reduced to a set of formal steps or procedures; "praxis is the central category." The implications of this view for the theory of revolution, of the party, and philosophy are discussed. Maintains that Gramsci "provides a formulation of Marxism free from the traditional trappings of orthodox versions," so that, if it is to become a meaningful political force in the West, Marxism will have to take a Gramscian path. EDWARD SHORTER, *"Women's Work: What Difference Did Capitalism Make?"* Maintains that, contrary to conventional wisdom, women suffered the most serious loss of social status in traditional economies. Under capitalism working women made fundamental advances toward gaining social equality with men. The "struggling working-class and peasant women" of the late 18th and early 19th centuries were (often unwittingly) the historical vanguard of women's liberation. JEROME KARABEL, A.H. HALSEY, *"The New Sociology of Education."* Radical educational theorists tend to focus on conflicts over the structure of the educational system, neglecting its content—a damaging omission in regard to the emergence of a radical theory of educational politics. The interpretive approach focuses on the content of education with the "management of knowledge" as its central problem. This approach does not offer a viable alternative for the research needs of the sociology of education, however. Only when it can link its findings with the structural studies which have traditionally dominated the sociology of education can the interpretive approach make a real contribution to educational research. Review essays on Andre Gunder Frank, Basil Bernstein, Lewis Feuer, and Paul Feyerabend. —DD

**TOWARD REVOLUTIONARY ART**, 3:1 (1976)

P.O. Box 40909, San Francisco, CA 94140. $5 per year (4 issues). BLUMA GOLDSTEIN, *"It's a Matter of Class: Some Reflections on the Politics of Art."* This discussion of the collective process in the production of Brecht's *Kuhle Wampe* compares it to Lina Wertmuller's *Swept Away*. DANIEL DEL SOLAR, *"Los Agachados de Rius."* An interview with the most popular and critical Mexican artist to appear since 1960, the cartoonist *Rius* (Eduardo del Rio). Having published several hundred comic books with political themes and cartoon versions of the *Communist Manifesto*, etc., he not only criticizes the government but also provides political education. PHIL SPINELLI, *"Auto Colantes do Portugal."* Having evolved as a mass propaganda device during the Portuguese revolution, these small stickers (i.e., Auto-Colantes) are actually miniature political posters to be slapped on walls or worn on clothing. REGINALD LOCKETT, *"Prophet's Blue Vision."* DAVID L. RICE, *"Brothers and Sisters."* Poems. INGRID BREDENBERG, *"Comix and Politix."* Brief introduction to the following works by some of the best American political comic artists. Includes comics and drawings by Guy Colwell, Trina Robbins, Lee Marrs, Harry Driggs, Spain Rodriquez, and Jay Kinney. ERNEST LARSEN, *"January 21, 1975: The Bourgeois Concept of Ideology"* and *"Koenigstein's Adolescence."* Two short stories. DAN CASSIDY, *"At the Ritz."* A poem. TOBY SILVEY, *"Stepping Out."* Describes a Bay Area women's dance collective of the same name formed two years ago to do political dance. *"Interview with R.G. Davis."* Founder and director of the San Francisco Mime Troupe for ten years up to 1969, R.G. Davis is now general director of Epic West in Berkeley, which seeks to become the major center in the U.S. for the study of Brecht. LUIS TALAMANTEZ, *"All of My Children."* A poem. —PFM

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